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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL
OPERATIONS FORCES BETWEEN 2003 AND 2009**

by

Gyula Wohlrab

March 2011

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Kalev Sepp
George Lober

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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS
FORCES BETWEEN 2003 AND 2009**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

Hungarian Special Operations Forces have the potential to enhance the security of Hungary. Seven years have passed from 2002, when the survey of the Cubic advisory team first recommended creating the Hungarian Special Operations Forces, until 2009 when these forces began operating in Afghanistan. In 2003, the Hungarian Ministry of Defense's comprehensive defense review identified special operations forces as a "niche" capability that could add strength to the defense forces and fill critical shortfalls in Peace Support Operations. The Hungarian political leadership endorsed developing a special operations capability package to enhance national security, contribute to the collective security of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, and fill shortfalls in Peace Support Operations led by these two international organizations.

In the last seven years, the Hungarian Defense Forces have created the legal framework for developing and employing their Special Operations Forces, assigned and trained units involved in the capability package, and made progress in establishing a special operations oversight structure and integrating these forces into the Hungarian defense establishment. Mentored by U.S. instructors, the Hungarian Defense Forces have made great progress, but there remains much to do. Most importantly, the political and military leadership should fully exploit capabilities of these forces for the security of Hungary.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| ACO | Allied Command Operations |
| AJP | Allied Joint Publication |
| CBRN | Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear |
| CIMIC | Civil-Military Cooperation |
| COMISAF | Commander International Security Assistance Force |
| EU | European Union |
| FHQ | Force Headquarters |
| FMF | Foreign Military Financing |
| FMS | Foreign Military Sales |
| FSK/HJK | Forsvarets Spesialkommando Hærens Jegerkommando (Norwegian Army Special Operations Commando) |
| GROM | Grupa Reagowania Operacyjno Mobilnego (Polish Operational Mobile Response Group) |
| HQ | Headquarters |
| HUMINT | Human Intelligence |
| HDF | Hungarian Defense Forces |
| HUNSF | Hungarian Special Forces |
| HUNSOF | Hungarian Special Operations Forces |
| IO | Information Operations |
| ISAF | International Security Assistance Force |
| JFC | Joint Forces Command |
| JGK | Jægerkorpset (Danish Hunter Corps) |

| | |
|----------|---|
| J-3 | Joint Staff for Operations |
| J-4 | Joint Staff for Logistics |
| KSK | Kommando Spezialkräfte (German Special Forces Commando) |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NSCC | NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre |
| NTM-I | NATO Training Mission-Iraq |
| OHQ | Operational Headquarters |
| OMLT | Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team |
| OP | Operational |
| OPCOM | Operational Command |
| OPCON | Operational Control |
| POLSOCOM | Polish Special Operations Command |
| PRT | Provincial Reconstruction Teams |
| PSTC | Peace Support Training Centre |
| PSYOPS | Psychological Operations |
| SF | Special Forces |
| SIGINT | Signal Intelligence |
| SITCEN | Situation Centre |
| SOCCE | Special Operations Command and Control Element |
| SOF | Special Operations Forces |
| SOTF | Special Operations Task Force |
| SOTG | Special Operations Task Group |

| | |
|---------|--|
| SOTU | Special Operations Task Unit |
| SRF | Special Reconnaissance Forces |
| STR | Strategic |
| S-4 | Unit-level Staff for Logistics |
| TAC | Tactical |
| TACON | Tactical Control |
| UAV | Unmanned Aerial Vehicle |
| UN | United Nations |
| U.S. | United States |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| USSATMO | U.S. Army Security Assistance Training Management Organization |

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis is a historical study that covers the development of the Hungarian Special Operations Forces between 1939 and 2009, with the main focus on the period of 2003–2009. The developing Hungarian Special Operations Forces have the potential to enhance the security of Hungary. Seven years after their initial conception, these Special Operations Forces are now operating in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led operation in Afghanistan.

In 2003, the Hungarian Ministry of Defense’s comprehensive defense review identified special operations forces as a “niche” capability that could add strength to the defense forces and fill critical shortfalls in Peace Support Operations. The Hungarian political leadership endorsed developing a special operations capability package to enhance national security, contribute to the collective security of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union, and fill shortfalls in Peace Support Operations led by these two international organizations.

The Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF) scheduled the development of their Special Operations Forces in two phases. Units missing from the Hungarian Special Operations Forces (HUNSOF) capability package were established in phase one. One of these was the 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion, established on September 1, 2005, by transforming the long-range reconnaissance battalion into a special forces battalion. This thesis studies this transformation. The strengthening of the cooperation between units in the HUNSOF capability package is currently underway in phase two.

In the last seven years, the Hungarian Defense Forces have created the legal framework for developing and employing their Special Operations Forces. The HDF established units missing from the Hungarian Special Operations Forces capability package, and the tactical and operational command and control elements of their Special Operations Forces; selected, trained, and educated their Special Operations Forces personnel; and made progress in integrating these forces into Hungarian defense establishment. Although the development of the HUNSOF is progressing, this thesis

identifies points where the development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved, and recommends improvements to the Hungarian Special Operations Forces themselves.

By deploying the Hungarian Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan, the political and military leadership have achieved one of the national interests in developing these forces: The HUNSOF fills shortfalls in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. In order to achieve other national interests in developing the HUNSOF – to add strength to the defense forces and enhance national security – the Hungarian defense establishment should consider employing the HUNSOF, especially their Special Forces elements, as an anti- and counter-terrorism capability.

The development of the Hungarian Special Operations Forces is mentored and supported by the United States Department of Defense. The Hungarian Defense Forces do not use national financial resources; rather, they have been using external resources to finance the development and improvement of these forces. Should political, economic and social conditions turn favorable, the HDF should also invest Hungarian forints into the development of their Special Operations Forces, which is considered to be one of the major ongoing HDF development projects. By doing so, less time would be required to attain world-class and fully operational special operations forces.

The strategic command and control element of the Hungarian Special Operations Forces is yet to be established. This thesis executes a theoretical exercise that compares options for the strategic command and control element of HUNSOF. Considering the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Forces Study* points of reference, and the current organizational design of the Hungarian Defense Forces, the HDF should assign a two-star Deputy Commander of the Hungarian Defense Forces Joint Forces Command for Special Operations Forces, with a small expert staff in the short-term. This strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF would advise the political and military leaders about how to more efficiently develop, deploy, and manage the HUNSOF.

The development and employment of the Hungarian Special Operations Forces also require subject matter experts. The Hungarian Defense Forces do not, however, have an institution that could teach Special Operations Forces and Special Forces-related subjects to the HUNSOF or raise Special Operations Forces thinkers. Therefore, the HDF and the HUNSOF community should develop subject matter experts by continuing to assign non-commissioned and commissioned officers to attend foreign military schools, academies, centers, and other educational institutions in the short-term. The graduates could then accumulate knowledge, collect best international practices, rigorously and systematically study the Special Operations Forces discipline, prepare analyses and recommendations, analyze Special Operations Forces history, follow international trends, and study how to optimize the stewardship of the HUNSOF. The Hungarian Defense Forces could then improve their Special Operations Forces by exploiting the gathered knowledge and experience of these graduates. The HDF and the HUNSOF community could develop their subject matter experts by assigning the Peace Support Training Centre for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Centre of Excellence for Special Operations Forces in the mid- and long-terms.

The Hungarian Special Operations Forces, in their first two rotations in Afghanistan between February and October 2009, carried out both direct and indirect tasks to support the Afghan conventional forces in countering an insurgency. This thesis assesses the effectiveness of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan with a newly- designed set of guiding criteria, the Collaborative Assessment Guide, because there is no universally accepted model that measures combat effectiveness and none of the existing models focus on collaboration with indigenous forces and population, a key aspect in countering insurgencies. This assessment points out that the HUNSOF should improve their ability to collaborate with relevant indigenous and international stakeholders involved in conflicts. Therefore, the HUNSOF and their Special Forces component should change their personnel selection mechanism, and develop a balanced set of selection criteria that assesses candidates for skills that facilitate and enhance both direct and indirect actions in special operations.

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Also, I heavily relied on the assistance of a few Hungarian subject matter experts. Some advised me from Hungary, and one assisted the development of this thesis while studying at the Department of Defense Analysis. Thank you, Brothers.

Last but not least, my parents stood next to me from across the ocean, and I enjoyed my wife's patience and love throughout the generation of this thesis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The engagement of the U.S. Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan soundly demonstrated that these forces could effectively contribute to counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency. Highly-trained U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) were deployed to Afghanistan on short notice in October 2001, only weeks after the U.S. intelligence apparatus confirmed the Taliban regime had supported and provided safe haven to the international terrorist organization al Qaeda, responsible for the terrorists' attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. SOF represented the first wave of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and not only set the stage for the arrival of the main body, but managed to overthrow the rogue Taliban regime in two months. The impressive achievement of U.S. SOF came from their unique capability to effectively operate by, through, and with the indigenous population and forces. U.S. SOF unified anti-Taliban militias and led the Afghan Northern Alliance to oust the Taliban regime. The later waves of U.S. general purpose forces pushed the Taliban leadership out of Afghanistan into Pakistan, where the Taliban managed to resurrect and launch an insurrection into Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the U.S. SOF achieved remarkable results in the early phases of the military campaign.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Forces Study (NATO SOF Study) states “spectacular feats of triumph and tragic failures have served as catalysts” for developing special operations forces worldwide in the last three and a half decades.¹ Recently, the U.S.-led war on terrorism, especially its SOF dimension, has served as a catalyst for a new wave of nations developing capabilities to counter asymmetric challenges around the world. Allied militaries, partner states, and other nations have been impressed by the effect that some 350 U.S. SOF personnel could generate in such a short time. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) soon

¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Coordination Centre, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Special Operations Forces Study* (NSCC, 2008), 1.

joined the war on terrorism and the nation-building effort in Afghanistan.² As a result, allied militaries have started to analyze which military capabilities they could contribute to the allied fight against international terrorism. Seeing U.S. SOF effectiveness in Afghanistan, some Eastern and Central European NATO member countries such as Hungary and Romania have identified SOF as a capability that could add great value to NATO's collective efforts, and have subsequently decided to develop their own SOF. Poland has received incentives from the U.S. SOF success in Afghanistan to enhance and increase the autonomy of Poland's developing SOF. In addition to these Eastern and Central European NATO countries, Mexico is also developing SOF.³ In summary, SOF is undergoing a world-wide rebirth: many states are currently developing SOF because of the U.S. SOF successes in Afghanistan.

In 2003, the Hungarian Ministry of Defense directed a comprehensive defense review in order to identify the direction for the future development of the Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF). The paramount observation of the defense review was that the HDF simply could not generate a full spectrum of military capabilities because the total number of defense forces personnel is 24,500. Rather, the HDF had to identify a handful of so-called "niche" capabilities that could add the most strength to the defense forces and fill up critical shortfalls in multinational Peace Support Operations. By doing so, the HDF could effectively contribute to the collective security of NATO and the European Union (EU), which has been one of the HDF's main tasks, as well as to military

² As of 2009, NATO represents an Alliance of 28 member countries including Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The fundamental role of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means. The Bonn Agreement, signed in Bonn, Germany on December 22, 2001, marks the starting point of NATO's involvement in the stabilization of Afghanistan. Chapter V of this thesis provides more details about NATO's military engagement in Afghanistan. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "What is NATO?," <http://www.nato.int> (accessed August 13, 2008).

³ Author's interview with Lieutenant Commander Alfonso Garces Reyes, Mexican Navy, Naval Postgraduate School, April 15, 2009.

operations led by these two international organizations.⁴ Therefore, the HDF decided to establish forces that are capable of conducting civil-military cooperation; psychological operations; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense; information operations; and special operations. This thesis provides a historical study of the development of the Hungarian Special Operations Forces (HUNSOF) between 2003 and 2009. Views and thoughts presented in this thesis do not represent the official stance of the Republic of Hungary or the Hungarian Ministry of Defense.

A. TARGET AUDIENCE

This thesis targets the HDF Operations Center, Lessons Learned Section; the Special Operations Section within J-3 of the HDF Joint Forces Command (JFC); and the HDF Peace Support Training Centre.

The HDF Operations Center, Lessons Learned Section collects and produces ideas that might improve any aspect of the Hungarian Defense Forces, and the Section has a direct connection to senior military decision-makers. The Special Operations Section within J-3 of the HDF Joint Forces Command is the operational, and highest existing, command and control element of the HUNSOF and it also has a direct connection to senior military decision-makers. The HDF Peace Support Training Centre carried out the qualification course of SOF operators in 2008 and is a candidate for the NATO Centre of Excellence for SOF. The Centre accumulates scientific studies of SOF. Therefore, it is worthwhile to target these three organizations with this thesis.

The hope is that this thesis will induce further thinking in academic and military circles, and the HUNSOF community; and generate discussion about the stewardship options for the HUNSOF and the newly designed Collaborative Assessment Guide.

⁴ Hungary is a NATO member state since 1999, and gained membership in the European Union in 2004. The European Union is an economic and political union of 27 member states that are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Europa, "Basic Information," <http://europa.eu> (accessed August 13, 2008).

B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The target audience fundamentally determines the purpose of this thesis. This thesis records the origins of the HUNSOF, analyzes phase one of the HUNSOF development process, assesses the HUNSOF effectiveness in Afghanistan, identifies points at which the development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved, and recommends improvements to the HUNSOF.

This thesis:

- records the origins and development of the HUNSOF from the 1930's to the present because the development of the HUNSOF, one of the major ongoing HDF development projects, is little studied.
- studies the options for stewardship for the HUNSOF and outlines the recommendations for determining the optimal stewardship for the HUNSOF because these forces do not have a strategic command and control element.
- assesses the effectiveness of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan with a newly designed set of guiding criteria, the Collaborative Assessment Guide, because there is no universally accepted model that measures combat effectiveness, and none of the existing models focus on collaboration with indigenous forces and population, a key aspect in countering insurgencies.
- focuses on phase one of the HUNSOF development process because this period is not studied yet, and identifies lessons in this period that could then improve the HUNSOF. In 2003, the political and military leadership decided to establish the HUNSOF. The HDF outlined the development of the HUNSOF that is basically a capability package in two phases. Units missing from the HUNSOF capability package were to be established in phase one. This thesis studies the progress the HDF made in developing the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion in phase one, including their deployment in Afghanistan, identifies points at which the

development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved, and recommends improvements to the HUNSOF. The cooperation between units in the HUNSOF capability package will be strengthened in the ongoing phase two that invites Hungarian subject matter experts for analysis.

C. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This thesis is a historical study of the development of the HUNSOF. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett state in *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* that process tracing or analytic narrative help to examine relationships through time within one single case.⁵ Since the development of the HUNSOF is a series of events where chronology matters, process tracing is appropriate for this thesis.

This thesis uses process tracing in Chapters II, IV, and V. Interviews with German, Hungarian, Norwegian, and Polish SOF officers have contributed to Chapters III, IV, and V. This thesis also uses comparisons in Chapters III and IV.

D. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter I introduces the thesis and covers the target audience, purpose and scope, method of analysis, and organization of the thesis.

Chapter II explains the Hungarian understanding of SOF and the legal framework of the development and employment of the HUNSOF; summarizes the pioneering master's thesis of Porkoláb and Bári, and provides elements that were materialized from their thesis; and provides insight into the history of the parachutist/reconnaissance battalion, the core of the HUNSOF, between 1939 and 2009.

Chapter III executes a theoretical exercise that compares options for the strategic command and control element of HUNSOF and outlines the recommendations for determining the optimal stewardship for the HUNSOF.

⁵ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2005), 208.

Chapter IV studies phase one of the HUNSOF development process in which the HDF transformed the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Long-range Reconnaissance Battalion into a special forces battalion between 2003 and 2009. Chapter IV compares the Hungarian national interests to develop a Special Military Unit with those of the Danish, German, Norwegian, and Polish Special Military Units. Chapter IV studies the major challenges the HDF faced while developing its SOF between 2003 and 2009 and identifies points at which the development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved.

Chapter V studies the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the ISAF SOF, and the deployment of the HUNSOF's first two rotations in Afghanistan between February and October 2009 and identifies points at which the development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved.

Chapter VI introduces the Collaborative Assessment Guide, uses it to assess the HUNSOF effectiveness in Afghanistan, and identifies points at which the development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved.

Chapter VII concludes the findings of this thesis and recommends improvements to the HUNSOF.

II. THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES BETWEEN 1939 AND 2009

The military has not been the first recourse of modern Hungarian statecraft. The military and the employment of the defense forces are vital instruments of statecraft. Nonetheless, in the last seven decades the Hungarian political leadership has employed its Defense Forces with varying levels of intensity. Defense Forces played a key role in the 1940s, especially during World War II, and Hungarian political leaders used military forces intensively. The Cold War, however, changed the attitude of communist Hungarian regimes toward their defense forces. Participation in the invasion of Czechoslovakia was the single major employment of the Hungarian People's Army during the four decades of the Cold War. In August 1968, forces from five of the Warsaw Pact countries; Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union, jointly invaded Czechoslovakia in order to destroy the liberalization process. Democratic Hungarian regimes have since rediscovered their defense forces and employed them often in Peace Support Operations in the Post-Cold War World. The history of the Hungarian Special Forces contains unique features, but its evolution has been fundamentally determined by the politicians' willingness to employ defense forces in general. Therefore, the history of the Hungarian Special Forces is similar to that of the Hungarian Defense Forces.

This chapter provides the legal and historical context for the development of the HUNSOF. The first section explains the Hungarian understanding of SOF and the legal framework for the development and the employment of the HUNSOF. The second section reviews the results of the development of the HUNSOF. There are only a few academic studies on the development of the HUNSOF. In their pioneering master's thesis, Imre Porkoláb and Gábor Bári envisioned the mission, structure, tasks, command and control of the HUNSOF.⁶ In his master's thesis Csaba Kovács offers an analysis of

⁶ Imre Porkoláb and Gábor Bári, *Enhancing National Security in Hungary through the Development and Employment of Special Forces* (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2006).

the missions and limitations of the HUNSOF, and its cooperation with other branches and services.⁷ The second section summarizes attributes that were materialized from the vision of Porkoláb and Bári. The third section provides insight into the history of the parachutist/reconnaissance battalion that was transformed into a SOF battalion. The fourth section summarizes the findings of Chapter II.

A. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles of the development and the employment of the HUNSOF capability are set in the *Paper of the Chief of Defense Staff of the Ministry of Defense* that was countersigned by the Minister of Defense.⁸ The *Paper* states that either the Parliament or the Government of the Republic of Hungary is eligible to decide about the employment of the HUNSOF within or beyond the boundaries of Hungary. The *Paper* states that the HUNSOF can be deployed:

- to defend the sovereignty of the Republic of Hungary against external aggression upon the defined task for the HDF in Article 70, paragraph (1), subparagraph a) of the Act No. CV of 2004 on the country's defense and the HDF (hereinafter referred to as National Defense Law). The HUNSOF fulfills related tasks individually or in cooperation with other military or security forces, under national or NATO command, within or beyond the boundaries of Hungary.
- to execute commitments in special operations, especially those of collective defense specified in NATO and international contracts beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary upon the defined task for the Hungarian Defense Forces in Article 70, paragraph (1), subparagraph b) of the National Defense Law. The HUNSOF fulfills related tasks, especially

⁷ Csaba Kovács, *A Különleges Műveleti Erők Helye, Szerepe és Tevékenysége a 21. Század Katonai Műveleteiben* (Budapest: Miklós Zrínyi National Defense University, 2007).

⁸ Colonel General András Havril, "A Magyar Honvédség Különleges Műveleti Képessége Alkalmazásának és Fejlesztésének Alapelvei, Reference no. MK HM 1194/2008," Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, July 28, 2008.

in United Nations (UN) -mandated multinational missions, and NATO and coalition campaigns in all spectrums of the conflicts.

- to participate in the achievement of the military objectives of the fight against international terrorism beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary upon the defined task for the HDF in Article 70, paragraph (1), subparagraph c) of the National Defense Law. The HUNSOF fulfills related tasks especially in UN-mandated multinational missions, and NATO and coalition campaigns in all spectrums of the conflicts.
- to participate in the fight against armed conflict within the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary in case a state of emergency declared. Article 70, paragraph (1), subparagraph f) of the National Defense Law that also refers to the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary for describing those circumstances under which defense forces may be used within the boundaries of Hungary:

In the event of armed actions aimed at overturning constitutional order or at the acquisition of exclusive control of public power, or in the case of grave acts of violence committed by force of arms or by armed groups which endanger the lives and property of citizens on a mass scale, during a state of emergency declared in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the armed forces may be used, if the use of the police proves insufficient.⁹

- to participate in disaster relief operations, especially of search and rescue, within the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary upon the defined task for the Hungarian Defense Forces in Article 70, paragraph (1), subparagraph h) of the National Defense Law. The HUNSOF fulfills related tasks unarmed.¹⁰

⁹ The Parliament of the Republic of the Hungary, Act XX of 1949, The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, Chapter VIII. The Armed Forces and the Police, Article/40B sub paragraph (2), October 23, 1989.

¹⁰ Colonel General Havril, *A Különleges Műveleti Képesség Alkalmazásának és Fejlesztésének Alapelvei*, 2.

The *Paper* emphasizes that the HUNSOF is essentially a capability package of special forces, combat support forces, special operations capable forces or enablers, combat service support, and command and control elements. In that regard, this thesis will focus specifically on the development of the 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion that represents the special forces of the HUNSOF. Figure 1 shows the HUNSOF capability package.

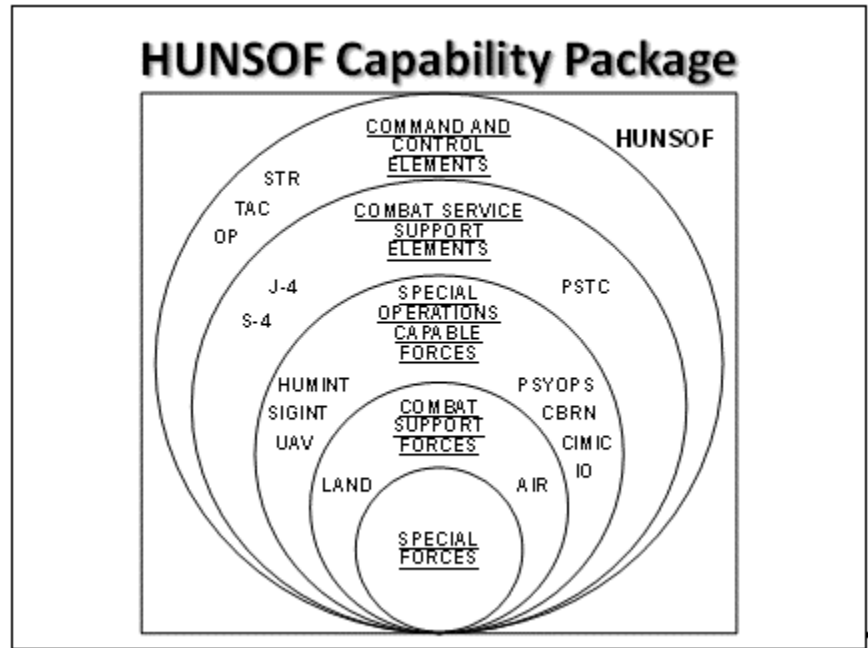


Figure 1. The HUNSOF Capability Package

The airmobile infantry of the 25/88 Light Mixed Battalion constitutes the land element, while assault and transport helicopters of the 86th Szolnok Helicopter Base form the air element of the combat support forces. The current air element of combat support forces does not, however, meet all the operational requirements; therefore, the air element is considered to be temporary until the HDF develops new capabilities for fixed- and rotary-wing aircrafts, and train the respective crews to adequately support the special forces and the airmobile infantry.

Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) operators of the Military Intelligence Office of the Republic of Hungary and the 24th “Gergely

Bornemissza” Reconnaissance Battalion of the 5th “István Bocskai” Infantry Brigade; Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and their crews of the 24th “Gergely Bornemissza” Reconnaissance Battalion of the 5th “István Bocskai” Infantry Brigade; Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) laboratory and its crew of the “Dr. György Radó” Honvéd Medical Center; Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) and Information Operations (IO) experts of the Civilian-Military Cooperation and Psychological Operations Centre embody the special operations capable forces.

The Peace Support Training Centre (PSTC), the HUNSOF’s own logistical elements (S-4), and multinational/coalition logistical support (J-4); such as the NATO Strategic Airlift Interim Solution, cover combat service support elements.¹¹

The leaders of all the involved units represent the tactical (TAC) command and control element. The Special Operations Section within J-3 of the JFC is the operational (OP) command and control element, and the strategic (STR) command and control element is still to be established.

This section explained the Hungarian understanding of SOF and the legal framework for the development and the employment of the HUNSOF. The next section reviews the results of the development of the HUNSOF.

¹¹ Since 2000, the HDF Peace Support Training Centre also carries out the pre-deployment training for Hungarian military, police, and civilian personnel, and conducts the International Military Observer Course that is accredited (2007) by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Air refueling and strategic airlifting became acute capability gaps after NATO launched operations out of the Euro-Atlantic region. In order to fill these capability gaps, NATO has created the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS). The initial contract for SALIS was signed by NATO Maintenance and Support Agency (NAMSA), representing NATO interests, and Ruslan SALIS GmbH, representing Antonov ASTC (Ukraine) and Volga-Dnepr (Russia) group of companies in Leipzig, Germany on January 13, 2006. This contract has allowed NATO to use AN-124 Ruslan transport aircrafts for strategic air transport under favorable financial agreements between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2008. In accordance with the contract, two AN-124-100 airplanes are constantly based in the airport of Leipzig, ready to carry out cargo at the request of 16 NATO-member countries: Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom, and two partner nations: Finland and Sweden. The contract was prolonged until December 31, 2010. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO A-Z, Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS),” http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50106.htm (accessed September 1, 2009).

B. FROM VISION TO REALITY

The master's thesis of Porkoláb and Bári has provided the theoretical framework for the development of the HUNSOF, and these forces are being developed based on their vision. The parachutist/reconnaissance battalion, which is the predecessor of the special forces element of the HUNSOF, has been widely studied, and there is a growing body of literature about it. Since the Special Operations Battalion is, however, a young military unit and the HUNSOF is a new capability package, the military discipline of SOF is understudied. Porkoláb and Bári did the pioneer thesis about the HUNSOF. Their thesis analyzes how the strategic environment changes in the nature of war, and how characteristics of potential adversaries might affect the development of the HUNSOF. However, the thesis of Porkoláb and Bári also has an implicit limitation: It describes only the development of the HUNSOF between 2003 and 2005. Nevertheless, their contribution to the scientific study of one of the major ongoing HDF development projects is undeniable since Porkoláb and Bári have framed the evolving characteristics of the HUNSOF. Their thesis was based upon scientific standards, and is considered to be the first chapter of the book about the development of the HUNSOF. This thesis adds the second chapter to the book that does not simply record, but also analyzes, phase one of the development of the HUNSOF. The third chapter of the book that covers phase two of the development process of the HUNSOF invites the analysis of Hungarian subject matter experts.

Additionally, after completing their pioneering thesis, Porkoláb has remained committed to the development of the HUNSOF in practice. He first was assigned to lead the Special Operations Section within J-3 of the JFC from spring 2007, and he assisted in the establishment of the HUNSOF. Thereafter, he was assigned as ISAF Special Operations Component Command Element liaison officer to the Afghan National Security Forces in Afghanistan in December 2008, with the additional task of managing the deployment of the first Special Operations Task Unit of the 34th 'László Bercsényi'

Special Operations Battalion in Afghanistan.¹² And finally, upon finishing his tour in Afghanistan, Porkoláb was assigned to command the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion in April 2009. Bári was assigned to the Hungarian Ministry of Defense and assumed other tasks.

The master's thesis of Porkoláb and Bári has provided the foundation for the development of the HUNSOF. Their first premise is that because of Hungary's NATO and EU membership, Hungary will be involved in dealing with unconventional challenges that characterize the current international arena. Logically, therefore, Hungary needs capabilities to cope with unconventional threats. Their second premise is that available Hungarian general purpose forces are not experienced enough to meet unconventional challenges, so Porkoláb and Bári propose generating a special operations capability that would be prepared to effectively deal with unconventional threats. Their premises have been analyzed and accepted. The HUNSOF has been developed based on their vision.

Their third premise is that successful special operations depend on three attributes: Clear national and theater strategic objectives; effective command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence support; and a force trained, equipped, and organized specifically to conduct special operations. Based on their premise, all relevant segments of the HUNSOF were developed, taking into account two national strategic papers: The *National Security Strategy* and the *National Military Strategy*. Since the HUNSOF has been designed to operate mostly as part of a multinational unit, the *AJP-3.5 Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations* and *MC 437/1 NATO Special Operations Policy* for NATO, and the *EU Special Operations Policy and Guidelines* from the EU, were also taken into consideration. In order to make it more effective, Hungary has fine-tuned the national and theater strategic objectives; advanced command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence support; and updated the training, equipment, and organization of its SOF.

¹² Special Operations Task Unit is the NATO terminology for the smallest special operations unit of 4-16 operators. The equivalent U.S. terminology is Operational Detachment Alpha. This thesis consistently uses the NATO terminology.

To achieve and maintain effective command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence support, Porkoláb and Bári argue that the Defense Staff should exercise direct command over HUNSOF through a newly designed Special Forces Coordination Office. They propose the purposes of that office are to direct the HUNSOF development process; to interact with all operational level national agencies and the international SOF community; to keep the strategic level updated, correctly informed and provided with expert advice; and to provide control of HUNSOF during operations. The HUNSOF was assigned under the direct command of the JFC in 2007. The Special Operations Section within J-3 of the JFC was established in March 2007, and writes regulations and deals with operational planning. For effective and correct usage of SOF, Porkoláb and Bári also propose creating a pool of “managers” who bridge the gap between SOF operators and senior civilian and military executives by highlighting the capabilities and limitations of SOF. Upon their proposal, staff officers were assigned to conduct SOF-related studies in the United States starting in 2008, so that upon returning to Hungary they would become these managers. To integrate the HUNSOF into the international SOF community, Porkoláb and Bári recommend deploying liaison detachments to SOF components of NATO and EU headquarters. One liaison officer was assigned to the NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre (NSCC) to serve as a bridge between the Hungarian, NATO, and the EU SOF communities in July 2006.¹³ One non-commissioned officer was assigned to NATO Special Operations Coordination Center in September 2009 to reinforce the liaison officer. As the previous section noted, however, the command and control element of the HUNSOF at the strategic level is still to be established.

Porkoláb and Bári propose three groups of tasks for the HUNSOF. Their proposed pool of primary tasks includes unconventional warfare, combating terrorism, special reconnaissance, and direct action. They also suggest collateral tasks: human intelligence, information operations, and psychological operations. In addition, they

¹³ NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre moved from Stuttgart, Germany to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) Mons, Belgium during the summer of 2007.

recommend considering counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and civil-military cooperation as possible tasks. Based on their visionary analysis, the following tasks were finally assigned for the HUNSOF. These primary tasks include military assistance (first priority), special reconnaissance, and direct action. Additional tasks are: participating in the military tasks of countering terrorism, the proliferation of conventional and unconventional weapons, and organized crime abroad; participating in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; joining in peacetime and wartime search and rescue missions; supporting information operations; protecting and securing high-value targets; and executing hostage rescue missions.

Finally, Porkoláb and Bári provide the framework for recruitment, selection, training, and retention of the HUNSOF. They set the standards for selection; describe the underlying characteristics and skill sets that special operations operators have to obtain; highlight the necessity of language, cultural, and international training and joint exercises; and underline essential measures that military leadership have to take in order to be able to retain HUNSOF operators. Their views are reflected in the provision that schedules the development process of the HUNSOF in the short- and mid-terms.¹⁴ Additionally, István Soós has recently generated a master's thesis that covers the training aspect of the HUNSOF.¹⁵

This section reviewed the thesis of Porkoláb and Bári, which provided an excellent framework to the development of the HUNSOF. Most of their recommendations and suggestions were further studied, found feasible, endorsed, and finally realized. Porkoláb has remained committed to the development of the HUNSOF in practice. He shaped the HUNSOF first as Head of the Special Operations Section, and he has been the commander of the 34th 'László Berceányi' Special Operations Battalion as of 2009. Porkoláb has been one of the Founding Fathers of the HUNSOF. This

¹⁴ Lieutenant-General László Tömböl, "A Magyar Honvédség Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság Parancsnokának Intézkedése a Különleges Műveleti Képesség Rövid- és Középtávú Fejlesztésére, Reference no. MH ÖHP PK 345/2008," Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces, October, 29, 2008.

¹⁵ István Soós, *Changes in Hungarian SOF Training*, (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2009).

section described the recent development of the HUNSOF between 2003 and 2009. However, in order to understand the inducements of the development process of the HUNSOF, a more extensive overview should be considered. The next section thus recounts the time just prior to the onset of World War II and studies the past of the Hungarian Special Forces.

C. HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL FORCES

1. World War II Period

The Hungarian military leadership realized the trend of European powers intensively developing special military units, especially airborne infantry and special forces, by the late 1930s. The Soviet Union, for example, often described as a great power that was not prepared for World War II, possessed about 50,000 trained airborne infantrymen by 1937.¹⁶ Germany established its first parachutist regiment (about 600 men strong) in January 1936.¹⁷

In 1938, the Hungarian Ministry of Defense allocated 1.8 million pengő for the establishment of a parachutist company.¹⁸ The Honvéd Parachutist Company was hurriedly set up in the town of Pápa on October 1, 1939, as part of Hungary's military preparation on the eve of World War II.¹⁹ As a result of an increase in personnel by August 30, 1940, the I. Royal Hungarian Honvéd Parachutist Battalion, the first modern Hungarian special military unit, was established with the main task of carrying out subversion. The battalion was part of the first wave of joint German-Hungarian-Italian forces that assaulted Yugoslavia in April 1941. The Hungarian objective of the offensive

¹⁶ Ferenc Szentnémedy, "A függőleges átkarolás kérdéséhez," *Magyar Katonai Szemle*, 1937, issue 2, 104.

¹⁷ Christopher Ailsby, *Hitler's Sky Warriors: German Paratroopers in Action, 1939-1945* (Spellmount, Limited Publishers, 2000), 26.

¹⁸ The indicated cost excludes the procurement of the transport airplanes. Gábor Sztojalovszky, *A Magyar Királyi Honvédség Ejtőernyős Alakulata Megalakulásától 1945-ig* (Budapest, Miklós Zrínyi National Defense University, 1998), 17.

¹⁹ Until 1945, the Hungarian land forces were called the Royal Hungarian Army = "Magyar Királyi Honvédség." The term "Honvédség" refers to the structure of the land forces as a whole while the term "Honvéd" refers to any unit of the Royal Hungarian Army. Today, the term "Honvédség" refers not only to the land forces, but the defense forces as a whole: "Magyar Honvédség" = Hungarian Defense Forces.

operation was to seize the region called Bácska from Yugoslavia. The operation also marked Hungary's entry into World War II. The battalion's objective was to seize and hold a bridge of importance until ground forces relieved them. Even though the objective was achieved, the battalion's first deployment by parachute brought its first catastrophe at the same time: One of the four transport planes crashed shortly after taking off, killing 16 paratroopers, including the battalion commander and the bulk of his staff.²⁰

The battalion carried out one more deployment by parachute in the Eastern Carpathian Mountains on July 6, 1941. The objective of air-dropping supplies was also successfully achieved. For the rest of the war, the battalion fought in support of the general purpose forces fighting against partisan and Soviet troops on the Eastern Front. Even though the idea had emerged in 1941, lack of resources did not allow the establishment of another battalion until October 1944. The two battalions were then structured into a parachutist regiment. The fragmented regiment finally ceased fighting on May 11, 1945, in the territory of Austria, and it was disbanded at the same time. During World War II, the parachutist unit suffered forty-five percent casualties, and many of the survivors became prisoners of war.

Today, the multinational Heavy Airlift Wing, equipped with three C-17 Globemaster III transport aircrafts, is stationed in Pápa, the first hometown of the parachutist battalion. The multinational Heavy Airlift Wing is part of the NATO Strategic Airlift Capability Program.²¹

²⁰ Miklós Zrínyi National Defense University, *Katonai Ejtőernyőzés Magyarországon Egyetemi Jegyzet, 2. Fejezet, László Simon, A Magyar Katonai Ejtőernyőzés 1945-ig*, (Budapest: Miklós Zrínyi National Defense University), 15. Other sources put the number of fatalities between 15 and 20. The reason for the variation is that some counted only the paratroopers, while others added in the four airmen who were part of the aircrew.

²¹ Strategic airlift has been a long-standing critical shortfall for NATO. The Strategic Airlift Capability initiative was first announced in September 2006, and approved by the North Atlantic Council on 20 June 2007. The participants include ten NATO nations: Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and the United States; and two Partnership for Peace nations: Finland and Sweden. Membership in the initiative remains open to other countries. For further information, see http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50105.htm.

2. Cold War Period

Victorious powers limited Hungary's military capabilities after World War II. Consequently, even if the democratically elected government had wanted to, it was not in the position to reestablish the parachutist battalion. In 1948, the Communist Party took over Hungary. Enjoying the protection of the Soviet Union, the Communists did not care for the imposed limitations to military capabilities anymore, and they launched a wide-scale and costly militarization process in 1951. Fearing a threat from the Western powers, Hungary first doubled the manpower of its defense forces to 135,000, and the manpower exceeded 200,000 by 1952.²²

Militarization, however, consumed a great amount of Hungary's financial resources. Hungary spent 20 percent of its budget on the defense forces in the fiscal year of 1950: 2,050,000,000 forint of Hungary's 10,204,000,000 forint budget was allocated for the military.²³

The regime also reestablished the battalion as the 62th Detached Parachutist Battalion, this time in the town of Székesfehérvár in October 1951. The same year, the Communist regime forced all commissioned and non-commissioned officers who were veterans of World War II to retire, resulting in an enormous loss of expertise.

The growing military spending soon exceeded Hungary's means and capabilities, and exhausted the country. Consequently, the regime prepared a force reduction plan in 1953, at the same time cutting the military expenditure for 1954.

In his article, Lőrinc Dombi claims that the high sustainment costs of the parachutist battalion contributed to its disbandment of on November 30, 1954, as part of the disarmament.²⁴ Another plausible reason for its disbandment is that the Communists saw the parachutist battalion as a capability that could easily turn against their already unstable regime, and, therefore, they considered the battalion a possible threat. Even

²² Dr. Lajos Hajma, *A Katonai Felderítés és Hírszerzés Története Egyetemi Jegyzet* (Budapest: Miklós Zrínyi National Defense University, Department of Intelligence, 2001), 159–160.

²³ Hajma, *A Katonai Felderítés és Hírszerzés*, 159–160.

²⁴ Lőrinc Dombi, "60 Év Selyemszárnyakon," *Ejtőernyős Tájékoztató*, 1999, vol. 23, issue 3, 6.

though the popular revolution in 1956 supports the hypothesis that the Communist regime had not consolidated yet, there is no evidence that proves the battalion was disbanded because of the Communist sense of fear. Nonetheless, the disbandment went hand-in-hand with the loss of valuable expertise, experience, knowledge, equipment, and infrastructure.

The revolution of 1956 was quickly defeated by Soviet Forces, and by the time the Kádár-regime reconsolidated the Communist dictatorship, the parachutist battalion was reestablished again in the town of Székesfehérvár in 1959. Today, the Joint Forces Command is stationed in Székesfehérvár, the second hometown of the parachutist battalion.

The battalion relocated to the town of Szolnok, its current location, and was renamed the 34th Long-range Reconnaissance Battalion, where it received its later well-known “MN 3100” codename in 1963. It took decades for the battalion to recover from its first two troubled decades (fighting in the war, enduring two disbandments, and undergoing one relocation) and to regenerate the lost expertise and knowledge. Nevertheless, the battalion endured and has established its reputation as a highly-trained unit, capable of being deployed anytime during the coming decades, during which time the Hungarian People’s Army lost its prestige in the society, its morale went down, and its Russian-made military technology became obsolete. Yet, in his master’s thesis, Arnold Koltai describes these recovery decades in the history of the battalion, not as the period of success, but of neglect:

Although they are trained to conduct operational and strategic reconnaissance and are special operations capable, neither their knowledge nor their capabilities have ever been used to an optimum level in supporting military efforts protecting Hungary’s national interests. In fact, they have been somehow neglected. Although their special training and esprit de corps have made them the real elite of the Hungarian Army, very few in the political or military leadership recognize the opportunities these units offer in peacetime. Military and political officials in key decision making positions do not seem to be aware of what these units are capable,

therefore, no plans have been made for the employment of SRF [Special Reconnaissance Forces] in operations other than in wartime.²⁵

Even though the military alert status was raised for the battalion during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and it participated in the management of frequent flood crises, the battalion was never employed to fight during the Cold War.

3. Post-Cold War Period

In stark contrast with the stability of the Cold War, during which the Hungarian Communist regimes did not have to employ the battalion, the post-Cold War period has seen “small wars” in the Western Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan, which have led to the democratic Hungarian regimes oftentimes deploying the battalion.

As the Soviet Union began losing influence over its satellite countries, Hungary began diverging from its “Big Brother” during the 1980s. As a result of this break-away process, radical changes happened in Hungary: The democratic and multi-party political system was restored in 1989, free elections were held in 1990, and the last Soviet troops left the country in 1991.

The battalion was renamed after Count László Bercsényi in 1990. When radical changes also hit neighboring Yugoslavia in 1991, the newly structured Hungarian Defense Forces deployed the battalion to carry out border security tasks along the southern border between Hungary and Yugoslavia. By the time Hungary joined NATO in 1999, the crisis on the territory of former Yugoslavia had reached Kosovo. Elements of the battalion were among the first NATO troops deployed to Kosovo. In 2002, a platoon was also deployed to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

In 2003, the political and military leadership decided to establish the HUNSOB. The HDF assigned the 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Long-range Reconnaissance Battalion to be transformed to a special operation battalion in two phases. The 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion was established September 1, 2005, and the

²⁵ Arnold Koltai, *The Hungarian Army Special Reconnaissance Forces in Peace Operations* (Fort Leavenworth: The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2001), 48–49.

long-range reconnaissance battalion was transformed into a special forces battalion in phase one. In 2006, the first qualification course assisted by a Mobile Training Team was held and the battalion also reached the Initial Operational Capability. Chapter IV studies phase one. Additionally, one company of the battalion was transferred under NATO ISAF command in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2008, and three rotations of one Hungarian Special Operations Task Unit in 2009, while some elements were transferred under NATO Training Mission–Iraq (NTM–I) command in Iraq in 2005. The deployment of the Hungarian Special Operations Task Units in Afghanistan is analyzed in Chapter V. Figure 2 shows the insignia of the Hungarian Defense Forces 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion.



Figure 2. Insignia of the Hungarian Defense Forces 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion

Even though the battalion has gained valuable experience in working by, through, and with the Iraqi and Afghan population and Security Forces in the last couple of years, there is still a lot to do in phase two of the HUNSOF development project: the special forces battalion is to be transformed into a special operations battalion and its cooperation with units in the HUNSOF capability package is to be strengthened. A Special Operation Task Group will achieve full operational capability by the end of 2010. Table 1 summarizes the history of the Hungarian Defense Forces 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion.

| Historical Milestones of the Hungarian Defense Forces 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| Period | Year | Event | Size | Location | Profile | |
| | | | | | | |
| World War II | 1939 | Establishment | Company | Pápa | Parachutist | |
| | 1940 | Establishment | Battalion Regiment | | | |
| | 1941-1945 | Engagement in World War II | | | | |
| | 1941 | Deployment in Bácska | | | | |
| | 1944 | Deployment in the Carpathian Mountains | | | | |
| | 1945 | Disbandment | | | | |
| Cold War | 1951 | Reestablishment | Battalion | Székes- fehérvár | | |
| | 1954 | Disbandment | | | | |
| | 1959 | Second Reestablishment | | | | |
| | 1963 | Relocation to Szolnok, Reorganization to Long-range Reconnaissance Battalion | | | | |
| Post-Cold War | 1991-1992 | Engagement in Border Security Operations | | | Szolnok | Long-range Reconnaissance |
| | 1999 | Deployment in Kosovo | | | | |
| | 2002 | Deployment in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | | | | |
| | 2004 | Deployment in Afghanistan | | | | |
| | 2005 | Transformation to Special Operations Battalion | | | | Special Forces |
| | 2006 | First Qualification Course, Initial Operational Capability | | | | |
| | 2007 | Deployment in Iraq | | | | |
| | 2008 | Deployment in Afghanistan | | | | |
| | 2009 | Deployment in Afghanistan | | | | |
| | 2010 | Full Operational Capability | | | | |

Table 1. Historical Milestones of the Hungarian Defense Forces 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion

4. Legendary Figures

The battalion honors the name of some legendary figures of the Hungarian military past. The namesake of the battalion, Count László Bercsényi (1689–1778), was also the founder of the modern French cavalry. He established the warfare style of the

Hungarian light cavalry, the Hussars. In recognition of his services, Count Bercsényi was promoted to Marshal of France the highest rank of the French Army.

Major Árpád Bertalan (1898–1941) received the merit title of “Vitéz” in recognition of his World War I services.²⁶ As first commander of the I. Royal Hungarian Honvéd Parachutist Battalion, he was killed in action while leading his unit when the transport plane crashed during the assault against Yugoslavia on April 12, 1941.

Captain Károly Hüse (1940–1978) was and is a sport parachutist legend. He was killed while performing his 6,263th parachutist jump.²⁷ His portrait was inaugurated at the base of the battalion in 2009. In posthumous remembrance of Major Hüse, young generations of parachutist sportsmen and women come together for one of the biggest parachutist sport events in Hungary, the annual ‘Károly Hüse’ Parachutist Memorial Competition.

Colonel (Retired) Kálmán Furkó (1947–) is a brand. Shihan Furkó (7 dan) has been teaching close combat and Kyokushin Karate for generations. He was also deputy commander of the battalion at the time he retired.

This section studied the history of the parachutist/reconnaissance battalion. The next section summarizes the findings of Chapter II.

D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

A military is one instrument of statecraft. Democracies place great emphasis on developing the legal framework for the employment of their defense forces. The *Constitution of the Republic of Hungary* and the *National Defense Law* adequately frame the employment of the Hungarian Defense Forces within and beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary. Furthermore, the *Paper of the Chief of Defense Staff of the Ministry of Defense* adequately regulated the employment of the HUNSOF capability package within and beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary.

²⁶ The term “Vitéz” refers to the merit title of “valiant.”

²⁷ Szolnoki Honvéd Ejtőernyős Sportegyesület, “Hüse Károly Életpálya,” *SzHES*, <http://www.szhes.hu/huse/huse.html> (accessed August 8, 2009).

Constructive cooperation between academics and practitioners is vital for improving and adjusting the defense architectures to ever-changing challenges. Putting into practice the vision of Porkoláb and Bári regarding the HUNSOF is an example of a fruitful collaboration between academic and operational circles. The thesis of Porkoláb and Bári has been considered to be the theoretical foundation of the HUNSOF and has been used as a guide for developing the HUNSOF. The HUNSOF has also benefitted from Porkoláb's commitment in the practical phase of the development process.

As we have seen, the history of the parachutist/long-range reconnaissance battalion included frequent deployments during World War II. Nevertheless, most of the development of the parachutist/long-range reconnaissance battalion from its establishment in 1940 until its reorganization to special operation battalion in 2005 occurred during peacetime.

What are the optimal conditions for building a new military capability? Is it worthwhile to build a capability during decades of peace without testing it in real action, or is it better to employ it often, even if it is not fully completed? It is possible to take care of every detail that might present itself while developing a capability in peacetime. Frequent deployments highlight weak points that can then be adjusted and, therefore, serve to improve the capability. There are pros and cons for both peacetime development and development through combat deployments. These are only two of the questions the history of the parachutist/long-range reconnaissance battalion—the predecessor of the Hungarian Special Forces and the core of the HUNSOF—raise and invite Hungarian subject matter experts to analyze. The next chapter studies possible strategic command and control element for the HUNSOF.

III. DETERMINING THE OPTIMAL STRATEGIC COMMAND AND CONTROL ELEMENT FOR THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

Four of the HUNSOF units are concentrated in the town of Szolnok: the 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion, the special forces of the HUNSOF; the 25/88 Light Mixed Battalion, the land element of the HUNSOF combat support forces; the 86th Szolnok Helicopter Base, the air element of the HUNSOF combat support forces; and the Peace Support Training Centre, one of the three HUNSOF combat service support elements. The first three units are located in the same base. The concentration of these units, representing the core HUNSOF capabilities, raises the question of establishing some kind of oversight or managerial structure in the town of Szolnok.

This chapter is a theoretical exercise that compares three options for the strategic command and control element of HUNSOF. The first section studies the possible organizational designs of stewardship for the HUNSOF. The second section outlines the recommendations for determining the optimal stewardship for the HUNSOF, and the third section summarizes the findings of Chapter III.

The leadership of all involved units in the HUNSOF capability package represents the tactical command and control element of the HUNSOF. The Special Operations Section within J-3 of the Joint Forces Command is the operational command and control element of the HUNSOF. There is no strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF. The *NATO SOF Study* “represents a compilation of research and analysis intended to provide a reference point to inform the continued optimization of national and NATO SOF.”²⁸ The *NATO SOF Study* accumulates knowledge on SOF from the following sixteen NATO member countries: Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania,

²⁸ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 3.

Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States; and one non-NATO country, Austria. The *NATO SOF Study* underlines the need for distinct special operations oversight or management structure:

Despite the differences among the development of the SOF within each nation, all NATO members agree that some form of oversight or managerial structure is necessary to serve as a custodian for the SOF units within their defence establishments, and to play a role similar to the one that the military service chiefs perform for conventional forces.²⁹

Therefore, the HUNSOF also needs some kind of oversight or managerial structure. But what kind of organizational design would be best for HUNSOF?

International examples and allocation of core HUNSOF capabilities would support the establishment of the Hungarian Special Operations Command. According to the *NATO SOF Study*, Canada, France, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States have joint special operations commands.³⁰ So why does Hungary not follow the international trend of either organizing special operations forces under a separate special operations oversight mechanism, or establishing a special operations service? The current allocation of core HUNSOF capabilities also supports the establishment of a Hungarian Special Operations Command. Since the 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion, the 25/88 Light Mixed Battalion, the 86th Szolnok Helicopter Base, and the Peace Support Training Centre are all located in the town of Szolnok, the Hungarian Special Operations Command could easily be established there with little additional investment in manpower and infrastructure of the four core units of the HUNSOF.

Additionally, the idea of establishing a Special Operations Command is not new in Hungary. Kovács was among the first who recommended the idea of establishing a Special Operations Command for further consideration.³¹ Porkoláb and Bári went further

²⁹ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 19–20.

³⁰ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 24.

³¹ Kovács, *A Különleges Műveleti Erők*, 73.

by recommending “a centralized and joint Special Forces service.”³² Previous academic studies, however, have not analyzed the strengths or weaknesses of establishing a Hungarian Special Operations Command or other possible organizational designs for the strategic command and control element of HUNSOF. This chapter fills this gap and provides an initial analysis. The next section studies the possible organizational designs of stewardship for the HUNSOF.

A. POSSIBLE ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGNS

The *NATO SOF Study* provides reference points to the question of how to determine the optimal organizational design for stewardship of a national SOF. First and foremost, the *NATO SOF Study* states:

Each NATO member will have to decide which organizational model would be optimal for providing the appropriate stewardship of their SOF within their defence establishment. Since NATO member nations are at different stages of their evolutionary journey to build and enhance their SOF, a single organizational model is not applicable to all.³³

Moreover, the *NATO SOF Study* has developed three special operations oversight models from the existing examples of NATO member countries, and they are offered for further consideration: a National Military Staff Element, a Component Command, and a Military Service. But which of the three organizational designs would best fit the HUNSOF? To make a proper decision, the strengths and weaknesses of the three SOF stewardship organizational design models described in the *NATO SOF Study* should be analyzed.³⁴

A Special Operations Service is the most ambitious organizational design for the stewardship of any SOF. A Special Operations Service provides a high level of autonomy in developing and sustaining SOF by managing policy, doctrine, training, resourcing, acquisition, personnel, and logistics. By controlling all SOF aspects, a Special Operations Service could employ great influence and foster the emergence of a

³² Porkoláb and Bári, *Enhancing National Security*, 129.

³³ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 29–30.

³⁴ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 22–30.

coherent and integrated joint force, SOF culture, and professional environment, and employ great influence. Creating a Special Operations Service requires, however, critical mass of SOF and assets, and an advanced evolution in terms of both time and the amount of gathered experience. Furthermore, a Special Operations Service contributes to the rivalry between traditional services, especially for resources. Poland has, for instance, a separate SOF service with an ambitious goal of attaining 3,000 SOF personnel by 2012.³⁵ In comparison, the U.S. Special Operations Command – which is not a service – employs approximately 54,000 personnel.³⁶

A Special Operations Component Command represents a moderately ambitious organizational design for the stewardship of SOF. A Special Operations Component Command provides a medium level of autonomy by defining SOF policy and doctrine, and establishing requirements for training, resourcing, acquisition, personnel, and logistics. By controlling some SOF aspects, a Special Operations Component Command could foster standardization and unity of effort among service SOF units, and employ some influence. Creating a Special Operations Component Command requires sufficient mass of SOF and assets, and some experience in developing and employing SOF. A Special Operations Component Command heavily relies, however, on traditional services during the pre-deployment period because it does not exercise command over SOF units until they deploy on operations. Canada, France, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States have joint special operations commands.

A National Military Staff Element for Special Operations represents the least ambitious organizational design for the stewardship of SOF. A National Military Staff Element for Special Operations provides a low level of autonomy by coordinating SOF plans, doctrine, training, and acquisition. By controlling only a few SOF aspects, a National Military Staff Element for Special Operations is still able to represent the

³⁵ The Polish Special Operations Command was established January 1, 2007. At the same time, SOF became the fourth service in addition to the Air Forces, Land Forces, and the Navy of the Polish Defense Forces. Author's Interview with a Polish Special Forces Major, wishing to remain anonymous, Naval Postgraduate School, October 21, 2009.

³⁶ Admiral Eric T. Olson, Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, Presentation at Naval Postgraduate School, October 27, 2009.

interest of national SOF within the national defense establishment and employs some influence. Even though a National Military Staff Element for Special Operations requires relatively few SOF units – since parent services retain control over their SOF units – it only has coordinating authority. The remaining NATO member countries that have contributed to the *NATO SOF Study* have national military staff elements for special operations.

This section discussed options for the strategic command and control element of HUNSOF. The next section provides the recommendations for determining the optimal strategic command and control element for the HUNSOF.

B. INITIAL ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an initial analysis to suggest to Hungarian academics and military planners to further study models provided by the *NATO SOF Study*, and generate other viable options that could contribute to defining the optimal strategic command and control element for the HUNSOF. Based on reference points of the *NATO SOF Study*, this thesis argues that the establishment of a Hungarian Special Operations Command and the creation of a Hungarian Special Operations Service are too ambitious and inopportune in both the short and mid-term for three reasons:

First, the HUNSOF contains neither sufficient mass of resources for establishing a Special Operations Command, nor for creating a Special Operations Service. In addition, the political and military leadership do not have enough experience in either developing or employing SOF.

Second, establishing a Special Operations Command would contradict the current organizational design trend of eliminating a multi-service command system and unifying operational-level command and control elements. Uniquely, the HDF JFC was established as the successor of the Land Force Command and the Air Force Command, which were abolished. The HDF JFC took over certain tasks of the Joint Forces Logistics and Support Command, the Signal and Informatics Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces, the Operation Command Headquarters, and that of the Medical Command of the

Hungarian Defense Forces (these latter were also abolished) effective January 1, 2007.³⁷ Establishing a separate Special Operations Command would conflict with this organizational design trend.

Third, no existing strategic military plan includes the establishment of the Special Operations Command or a Special Operations Service. In October 2007, the Hungarian political and military leadership announced that the reform of the defense forces that started in 1990 had come to an end, and the main focus would now be on the modernization and replacement of aging Soviet technology.³⁸ No more existing units are to be disbanded, or new ones established. After such an announcement, and because all the scheduled changes were completed during the defense reform, establishing a Special Operations Command or a Special Operations Service would create confusion. Therefore, any plan attempting to address the strategic command and control element of HUNSOF must be found within the existing force structure.

Bearing in mind these three considerations, military planners are outlining an oversight mechanism for the HUNSOF that is modeled after a National Military Staff Element for Special Operations, the least ambitious of the organizational designs for stewardship of SOF. Military planners are working on a plan that outlines a Special Operations Section at the Department for Operation and Training of the Ministry of Defense. According to the plans, the Special Operations Section at the Department for Operation and Training of the Ministry of Defense will be responsible for SOF plans and doctrine and be manned in 2010. Yet, subsequent years might prove that the HDF JFC is not the ultimate operational command structure and a service-based command configuration could be reinstituted. This situation could also provide opportunities for the establishment of a Special Operations Command or a Special Operations Service.

³⁷ The Joint Forces Command operates under the direct service subordination of the Chief of Defense Staff. The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces is a medium level command and control military organization with the legal status of a higher operational unit. Ministry of Defense, Hungarian Defense Forces, "The Joint Forces Command of the Hungarian Defense Forces," <http://www.hm.gov.hu/army> (accessed July, 3, 2008).

³⁸ Ministry of Defense, Hungarian Defense Forces, "HDF Reform Completed," http://www.hm.gov.hu/news/hdf_reform_completed (accessed September 14, 2009).

This means the HUNSOF still has time to generate more expertise, knowledge, and experience until a more ambitious strategic command and control element could be established. Internal preparations can last, however, a long time. For instance, the U.S. Special Operations Command was activated in 1987, after the U.S. SOF had served for decades.

This thesis provides recommendations to the establishment of the strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF in Chapter VII. This section outlined the recommendations for determining the optimal strategic command and control element for the HUNSOF. The next section summarizes the findings of Chapter III.

C. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Every military branch and service requires some kind of oversight or management structure of tactical, operational, and strategic command and control elements. So does SOF. The tactical and operational command and control elements of the HUNSOF are in place, but their strategic element is still missing. The *NATO SOF Study* provides three oversight models: the National Military Staff Element, the Component Command, and the Military Service. The Military Staff Element represents the least ambitious, and the Military Service represents the most ambitious organizational design for stewardship of SOF. This thesis argues that the establishment of a Special Operations Command and the creation of a Special Operations Service are too ambitious and inopportune in the short and mid-terms because the number of the HUNSOF personnel does not reach either sufficient or critical mass for these two organizational designs. In addition, the HDF eliminates rather than establishes service commands.

Military planners are working on the establishment of a Special Operations Section at the strategic level that is modeled after the least ambitious of the organizational design for stewardship of SOF, the National Military Staff Element. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to further analyze the best international practices to determine the optimal organizational design for the strategic command and control element of SOF. This thesis provides recommendations to optimize the strategic command and control element of HUNSOF in the short term in Chapter V. The next chapter studies the development of the Hungarian Special Operations Battalion.

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IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS BATTALION BETWEEN 2003 AND 2009

The HDF scheduled the development of the HUNSOF in two phases. Units missing from the HUNSOF capability package were to be established in phase one. The Civilian-Military Cooperation and Psychological Operations Centre and the 25/88 Light Mixed Battalion were established September 1, 2004. The 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion was established September 1, 2005, and the long-range reconnaissance battalion was transformed into a special forces battalion in phase one. This chapter studies that transformation.

The strengthening of the cooperation between units in the HUNSOF capability package will be effected in phase two. For example, the annual Exercise Direction of Action and the Afghan theater provide opportunities to practice cooperation among these units. The 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion is being transformed into a special operations battalion in phase two.

The first section of this chapter discusses Hungarian national interests in developing SOF. The second section studies the major challenges the HDF faced while developing their SOF. The third section summarizes the findings of Chapter IV.

A. NATIONAL INTEREST IN DEVELOPING SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

The *NATO SOF Study* mentions some SOF mission failures that caused problems for those who endorsed the missions:

Painful experiences in Munich, Ma'a lot, Malta, Desert One, and Beslan provide just a few illustrations of the price for inadequate preparation to face the inevitable challenges all governments will eventually encounter.³⁹

³⁹ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 17.

Alternatively, the successful U.S. SOF deployment in Afghanistan between October and December 2001 notably contributed to President George W. Bush's high job approval ratings, at that time.⁴⁰ Moreover, the *NATO SOF Study* also emphasizes that SOF usually operates in politically sensitive environments:

SOF operates outside the realm of conventional operations or beyond the standard capabilities of conventional forces, thus providing a solution to extraordinary circumstances of political interest when no other option is available.⁴¹

Being a member of NATO and the EU, Hungary has to proportionally contribute to the collective security of those two international organizations. The HUNSOF was considered to be a significant future contribution to the collective security of NATO and the EU, and it was perceived that the HUNSOF could fill critical shortfalls in multinational Peace Support Operations, which is an important national interest of the Republic of Hungary. Therefore, the political and military leadership endorsed the project to develop the HUNSOF in 2003.

It is likely the political and military leadership supported the development of SOF capability because when fully operational, the HUNSOF will be an effective national tool with which to counter international terrorism. The *National Military Strategy* warns that international terrorism may target Hungarian contingents abroad, and critical infrastructure in Hungary, as well as international interests in Hungary:

Terror acts are most likely to target contingents of the Hungarian Defense Forces operating in crisis-hit regions. Since international terrorism endeavors to provoke and demonstrate its existence, the threat level of some critical infrastructures and NATO and EU facilities and organizations located inside Hungary might also increase.⁴²

⁴⁰ Gallup, "Presidential Approval Ratings - George W. Bush," *Gallup*, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116500/Presidential-Approval-Ratings-George-Bush.aspx> (accessed February 20, 2009).

⁴¹ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, ii.

⁴² The Government of the Republic of Hungary, "National Military Strategy of the Republic of Hungary," January 21, 2009, 5.

Hungarian citizens could be taken hostage or Hungarian interests at home and abroad could be targeted by international terrorist organizations. Typically, military contingents, diplomats, embassies, consulates, and other Hungarian interests abroad are exposed to international terrorism. For example, the Hungarian Embassy in Islamabad was on the target list of terrorists who were arrested by Pakistani Security Forces at the end of June 2009.⁴³ It is the responsibility of Hungarian intelligence and law enforcement agencies to carry out anti- and counter-terrorism tasks inside the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary, while the special forces of the Hungarian defense establishment perform these tasks abroad. The HDF assumes purview only for supporting tasks in anti- and counter-terrorism.

Unlike Hungary, counter-terrorism has long been one of the major national interests driving the development of special military units in European democracies. For instance, Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Poland have had a strong counter-terrorism motivation in developing their Special Military Units.

Denmark established its Hunter Corps in 1961 so as to have special forces during the Cold War.⁴⁴ Over the decades, the Hunter Corps [*Jægerkorpset*, *JGK*] assumed the leading role as a national counter-terrorism capability. It is necessary to have such counter- and anti-terrorist capability since the terrorist threat caused by al Qaeda and affiliated extremist organizations against Denmark and Danish interests abroad increased due to Denmark's participation in NATO-led operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and especially since the Muhammad cartoons crisis in 2005.⁴⁵

⁴³ On June 24, 2009, the Hungarian MTI news agency announced that Pakistani law enforcement agencies foiled planned bomb attacks against western embassies in Islamabad. The target list of the arrested militants included the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Norway, South Africa, and Sweden. The Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed the MTI news. It should be noted that all of the targeted European states deploy troops in Afghanistan. MTV, "Merényletet Hiúsítottak meg a Magyar Nagykövetség Ellen," *MTV*, June 24, 2009, http://www.hirado.hu/Hirek/2009/06/24/11/Merenyletet_hiusitottak_meg_a_pakisztani_magyar_nagykovetseg_ellen.aspx (accessed August 12, 2009).

⁴⁴ Hæren Jægerkorpset, "About Jægerkorpset, History," <http://forsvaret.dk/JGK/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed August 22, 2009).

⁴⁵ On 30 September 2005, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published 12 cartoons of which 6 depicted Muhammad. The publication of the cartoons led to protests across the Islamic world, because Islam prohibits depiction of Allah and the Prophet.

Germany's motivation for developing its Special Forces Commando was to have a rapid response tool that would be capable of dealing with the increasing number of terrorist acts against German citizens and interests, as well as emergency situations abroad at the beginning of the 1990s. After asking for the help of Belgium, France, and other NATO Allies in evacuating German citizens from Iraq, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, and in rescuing German hostages from Rwanda between 1990 and 1994, Germany decided to establish its Special Forces Commando [*Kommando Spezialkräfte, KSK*] to tackle these kinds of crisis situations.⁴⁶

Attacks carried out by Marxist terrorist groups what David C. Rapoport calls the third wave of modern terrorism, starting in the early 1960s, turned the Norwegian decision-makers' attention to the fact that the Norwegian police lacked the capabilities with which to protect the oil drilling platforms and gas infrastructures in the North Sea that produced a great part of Norway's revenue from terrorist attacks.⁴⁷ Norway established the Norwegian Defense Special Commando (*Forsvarets Spesialkommando [FSK]*) as a subordinate unit of the Norwegian Army Ranger School (*Hærens Jegerskole [HJS]*) in 1982 to fill this capability gap. After several structural changes, the Norwegian Defense Special Commando is now called the Norwegian Army Special Operations Commando (*Forsvarets Spesialkommando - Hærens Jegerkommando [FSK/HJK]*) and it conducts all special operations missions, not just counterterrorism.⁴⁸

Poland established the Operational Mobile Response Group (*Grupa Reagowania Operacyjno Mobilnego [GROM]*) in 1990 to counter the increasing terrorist threat, to fill

⁴⁶ Author's interview with a German Officer, wishing to remain anonymous, Naval Postgraduate School, November 4, 2009.

⁴⁷ David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes, editors, *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 46–73.

⁴⁸ Author's interview with a Norwegian Special Operations Forces Officer, wishing to remain anonymous, Naval Postgraduate School, October 27, 2009.

the security vacuum left by the departing Russian troops, and to deal with home-grown and Russian organized crime groups until such a time as the police would be capable of taking over that task.⁴⁹

Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Norway, and Poland are all European democracies and NATO member countries that send troops to the Alliance's efforts in Afghanistan. Counter-terrorism has been one of the major national priorities in developing the Danish JGK, the German KSK, the Norwegian FSK/HJK, and the Polish GROM, while the development of the Hungarian 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion has not had a counter-terrorism motivation. When endorsing the development of the HUNSOF, the military consideration was not to have a national asset to counter international terrorism; but rather, to contribute to the collective security of NATO and the EU. This thesis recommends complementing this military consideration to the development of the HUNSOF in Chapter VII.

This section provided the Hungarian national interests of developing a special operations battalion. The next section analyzes the challenges the HDF faced while developing their special operations battalion.

B. CHALLENGES THE HUNGARIAN DEFENSE FORCES FACED WHILE DEVELOPING THEIR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

The HDF has to manage five major challenges in the course of the development and employment of its SOF: to maintain public support for employments abroad, to finance the development of its SOF, to meet the force proposal to NATO, to compensate the attrition of operators, and to complement lacking expertise.

⁴⁹ Poland assisted the mass migration of Jews fleeing the former Soviet Union to Israel by providing airports for transfer. This episode is known as Operation Bridge. As a reprisal to Poland's assistance to the Russian Jews, Hezbollah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine threatened Poland with terrorist actions. Author, Interview with a Polish Special Forces Major.

1. Public Support

In a democracy, military operations abroad require public support. The *National Military Strategy* emphasizes that the public has to support the Hungarian soldiers' participation in military operations abroad:

The Hungarian public is sensitive to military and civilian casualties; therefore, it is not enough to fight and achieve objectives in the battlefield. It is important that the public also receives the Hungarian participation in armed conflicts. This is an especially challenging situation while being involved in asymmetric conflicts.⁵⁰

In 2007, the military leadership proposed testing the HUNSOF in Afghanistan. The deployment of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan was perceived to be more risky than other military capabilities; therefore, the political leadership approached the deployment of the HUNSOF cautiously because of the risk of losses that might accompany the deployment. The *NATO SOF Study* profoundly captures the political concerns toward special operations:

In all instances, missions deemed “special” quite often entail significant politico-military risks with an entirely different calculus than those performed by conventional forces.⁵¹

Since the Hungarian society is not used to facing heavy military losses, serious losses in the ranks of the HUNSOF might result in the decline of public support for the entire Hungarian military presence in Afghanistan, and for Hungarian soldiers operating abroad in general. In order to maintain public support, the HDF employs information campaigns that notify the Hungarian society about relevant events and contribute to a better understanding of the activity of the Hungarian military forces deployed in Afghanistan, including the HUNSOF, other ISAF Troop Contributing Nations, and the efforts of the international community.

There is a growing body of literature that discusses how the degree of concern over casualties is a function of declining public support for military operations abroad.

⁵⁰ Government of Hungary, *National Military Strategy*, 9.

⁵¹ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 8.

Recalling the U.S. wars in Korea and Vietnam, Richard Betts claims in his article that factors such as “casualties in an inconclusive war, casualties that the public sees as being suffered indefinitely, for no clear, good, or achievable purposes” undermine public support.⁵² So, the deployment of the relatively small HUNSOF might jeopardize a much bigger contribution in Afghanistan: the Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team of about 300 personnel, and Hungary’s whole peacekeeping presence of some 1,000 personnel around the world.

Furthermore, the political and military leadership currently lack both the knowledge and the experience to employ its new HUNSOF. The HUNSOF does not yet have a command and control element at the strategic level that could advise the political and military leadership on how to best employ the HUNSOF, given the force’s limitations. Consequently, the political and military leadership have no clear picture of HUNSOF.

Bearing in mind these considerations, the political leadership has imposed limitations on the deployment of the HUNSOF; it is not authorized to execute counter-narcotics operations in Afghanistan. The military leadership is concerned about the unpredictable reaction of the political leadership and the society in case of major losses in the ranks of the HUNSOF. The death of two Hungarian explosives experts – another capability exposed to high risk – in Afghanistan in June and July 2008 has not reduced public support toward Hungary’s participation in ISAF.⁵³ The question is, though, what will be the tipping point in terms of casualties, leading to a cessation of public support for the Hungarian forces’ employment in Afghanistan. Therefore, the future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should maintain public support for the HUNSOF employment in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

⁵² Richard Betts, “What Will It Take to Deter the United States?,” *Parameters* 25, Winter 1995-96, 76.

⁵³ Ministry of Defense, Hungarian Defense Forces, “A Brief Overview of the Security Situation in Afghanistan, The Terrorist Attacks,” July 23, 2008, http://www.hm.gov.hu/army/missziok/osszefoglalo_az_afganisztani_biztonsagi_helyzetrol (accessed October 3, 2009).

2. Financing

The *NATO SOF Study* states SOF development requires a relatively minor expenditure of total defense costs:

In comparison to other defence expenditures, such a SOF capability requires a comparatively minor expenditure of total defence costs, especially when compared to the potential return on investment.⁵⁴

The *NATO SOF Study* provides a useful reference point about how much investment is required to build a SOF capability:

... an investment of approximately 13 million Euros [approximately USD 18.9 million] could completely outfit a 110 man land oriented SOF company / squadron sized organization with equipment including vehicular mobility, communication, computers, weapons, night vision, surveillance optics, and various other specialty equipment.⁵⁵

In the case of the HDF, the available financial resources for developing the HUNSOFF have been limited. For instance, no funds have been allocated for the transformation of the long-range reconnaissance battalion into a special operations battalion, which is the core of the HUNSOFF. A significant step forward was made in 2005, when Hungary found a strong partner, the United States, which provided its Foreign Military Financing (FMF) Program with funds to develop the HUNSOFF.⁵⁶ Since 2006, the United States continued its support. FMF allocates some USD 2 million per year for defense projects that Hungary has used to develop and improve SOF, deployable nuclear biological chemical/medical units, a high-readiness light infantry unit, engineer

⁵⁴ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, iv.

⁵⁵ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 31.

⁵⁶ “Foreign Military Financing, the U.S. government program for financing through grants or loans the acquisition of U.S. military articles, services, and training, supports U.S. regional stability goals and enables friends and allies to improve their defense capabilities. ... FMF helps countries meet their legitimate defense needs, promotes U.S. national security interests by strengthening coalitions with friends and allies, cements cooperative bilateral military relationships, and enhances interoperability with U.S. forces. Because FMF monies are used to purchase U.S. military equipment and training, FMF contributes to a strong U.S. defense industrial base, which benefits both America’s armed forces and American workers.” FMF funds purchases made through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, which manages government-to-government sales. U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, “Foreign Military Financing Program,” http://www.dsca.mil/home/foreign_military_financing%20program.htm (accessed October 10, 2009).

skills, and non-commissioned officer leadership in the last couple of years.⁵⁷ Prior to this, FMF allocated some USD 98 million between 1996 and 2005 to develop, modernize, and improve various capabilities of the HDF.⁵⁸

The United States also donates equipment to enhance the development and technical modernization of the HDF, including the HUNSOF. For instance, in August 2008, the United States donated 27 M998 M1152 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV, Humvees, Hummers) to Hungarian contingents operating in Afghanistan.⁵⁹ The HUNSOF received four of these vehicles.

Moreover, Hungary joined the NATO Special Operations Forces Transformation Initiative Concept through which participants can seek favorable financial arrangements when developing and procuring compatible equipment for NATO SOF.⁶⁰ The future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should lobby for better financial support that would enhance the development of the HUNSOF.

3. Force Proposal to NATO

The development of the HUNSOF has to meet the HDF force proposal to NATO. The *NATO SOF Study* states the development of SOF requires years:

No short cut exists to create SOF when crisis arise. Instead, years of training, education, and expertise acquired through an investment in time and resources are necessary to prepare SOF units to successfully perform special operations.⁶¹

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Government Assistance to Eastern Europe under the Support for East European Democracy Act, FY 2005-2008 SEED Act Implementation Reports,” <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rpt/c10247.htm> (accessed October 10, 2009).

⁵⁸ Imre Havasi, “Az USA külföldi katonai finanszírozás (FMF) Katonai segélyezési programja Magyarországon,” *Új Honvédségi Szemle*, May 2006, vol. 60., issue 5., 113–119.

⁵⁹ Balázs Trautmann, “Haditechnika, Humvee,” *Magyar Honvéd*, September 2008, vol. 19., issue 9., 39–41.

⁶⁰ Heads of state and government of NATO member states launched NATO Special Operations Forces Transformation Initiative Concept during their summit that took place in Riga, Latvia 28–29 November 2006 “to increase joint training and doctrine development, improve equipment, and enhance interoperability.” NATO Public Diplomacy Division, “NATO after Riga,” http://www.nato.int/docu/nato_after_riga/nato_after_riga_en.htm (accessed June 16, 2009), 5.

⁶¹ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, iv.

In 2005, the HDF assigned the HUNSOF for future NATO missions and undertook to have a fully operational SOF company by the end of 2010.⁶² This self-imposed time constraint forced the HDF to act quickly in order to meet the force proposal to NATO. This force proposal later was proved, however, to be too ambitious because the financial conditions were not favorable. Consequently, the HDF had to modify its original force proposal and assigned less capable HUNSOF for NATO operations.⁶³ The HDF prepares intense training schedules for the HUNSOF to meet the deadline of the force proposal to NATO. The future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should advise the political and military leadership to avoid making other ambitious force proposals to NATO.

4. Attrition of Operators

Addressing attrition of Hungarian Special Forces (HUNSF) operators is vital, because it takes more time and resources to train and educate personnel in special operations units than in general purpose forces. The HDF has to invest years of training and education into trainees so that they will be able to meet the high physical, mental, and medical standards for parachuting, diving, survival exercises and other military activities to which they will be exposed. It is worthwhile to do this; therefore, it is important to place emphasis on the retention of the relatively expensive special operations personnel, especially operators, who are usually non-commissioned officers and officer corps.

Problems arose in 2006, when large numbers of highly-trained SF operators with experience from Peace Support Operations started to quit the 34th 'László Berceányi' Special Operations Battalion, primarily for more remunerative civilian jobs. For instance, the attrition in 2007 was as high as 3 to 11 operators per month at the 400-man

⁶² Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, "The Republic of Hungary's Force Proposal to NATO Reference no. EG 3520 II, Special Operations Forces," Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, 2005.

⁶³ Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, "The Republic of Hungary's Force Proposal to NATO Reference no. EL 0035," Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Hungary, 2007.

strong 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion.⁶⁴ To address the high attrition rate, the HDF developed retention procedures and practices. The HDF launched a bonus program, gave special pay, and established more favorable retirement conditions for SF operators than for general purpose forces. As a result of these retention procedures and practices, the attrition slowly decreased to 2–5 operators per month in 2008, and 1–4 operators per month in 2009.⁶⁵

As seen, the HDF placed emphasis on pay to be competitive in the labor market. Nonetheless, it is still problematic to retain SF operators. Therefore, the future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should develop a comprehensive retention policy.

5. Expertise

Developing and deploying the HUNSOF require expertise. Since the HDF was lacking expertise at the early phase of the HUNSOF development process, the Hungarian political and military leadership requested the assistance of their NATO allies. The United States has volunteered to mentor of the HUNSOF and the U.S. Army Security Assistance Training Management Organization (USSATMO) has sent Mobile Training Teams to execute the training of the HUNSF.⁶⁶ In 2006, a U.S. Mobile Training Team assisted the first qualification course, and the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion reached the Initial Operational Capability. Since that time, the training and development procedure has quickened.

⁶⁴ Author's e-mail correspondence with the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion, September 8–22, 2009.

⁶⁵ Author's e-mail correspondence with the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion.

⁶⁶ "The United States Army Security Assistance Training Management Organization (USSATMO) is a U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command element specifically organized to deploy Army Security Assistance Training Teams outside of the continental United States to support overseas Security Assistance Organization training objectives. USSATMO is attached to the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School for operational oversight, and administrative and logistical support. USSATMO's mission includes forming, preparing, deploying, sustaining, and redeploying Security Assistance Teams composed of soldiers and civilians drawn primarily from continental United States based Army organizations." Global Security, "Security Assistance Training Management Organization," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/satmo.htm> (accessed October 9, 2009).

To gain field experience, one company of the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion was transferred to NATO ISAF command in Afghanistan in 2004 and 2008, while some elements were transferred to NATO Training Mission–Iraq (NTM–I) command in Iraq in 2005. In February 2009, one Hungarian Special Operations Task Unit was deployed to Afghanistan to be part of the 1st Battalion of the 10th Special Forces Group (hereinafter referred to as U.S. Task Force 1/10) for four months. Upon finishing their tour, another Special Operations Task Unit replaced them; and this will continue until all deployable Hungarian Special Operations Task Units finish their four-month tours.⁶⁷ HUNSOFT deployment in Afghanistan is studied in Chapter V, while the effectiveness of the Hungarian Special Operations Task Units in Afghanistan is studied in Chapter VI.

Additionally, SOF operators, non-commissioned officers, and staff officers were assigned to conduct SOF-related studies and training abroad in order to gain familiarity with tactical, operational, and strategic aspects of SOF. For instance, in addition to their training and education conducted in Hungary, six non-commissioned officers from the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion participated in Ranger, SOF, free fall parachuting, combat engineer, and combat radio operator courses and training in the United States in 2007.⁶⁸ Also, four officers from different units, commands, and agencies of the Hungarian defense establishment started their studies of the strategic aspects of SOF at the Naval Postgraduate School in the United States in 2008.

Thirteen contracted soldiers and non-commissioned officers from the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion attended combat medical, tactical satellite, combat radio operator, and advanced non-commissioned officer courses and trainings in Germany, Italy, Poland, and the United States in 2008.⁶⁹ Thirty military personnel representing all ranks and files of the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion participated in intelligence, SOF planning, combat medical, combat radio

⁶⁷ Author's interview with Lieutenant Colonel Imre Porkoláb, Commander of the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion, Monterey, California, December 2, 2008.

⁶⁸ Author, *E-mail Correspondence with the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion*.

⁶⁹ Author, *E-mail Correspondence with the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion*.

operator, winter mountain, staff officer, and tactical satellite courses and trainings in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, and the United States in 2009.⁷⁰ The future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should continue to have good relations with the mentor nation and the NSCC, and continue assigning HUNSOF personnel abroad for training and educational purposes in order to collect further knowledge and experience.

This section studied the major challenges that the HDF faced during the development of its SOF. This thesis provides recommendations on how to more efficiently address these challenges in Chapter VII. The next section summarizes the findings of Chapter IV.

C. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Hungarian political leadership endorsed the development of the HUNSOF because these forces can enhance national security, contribute to the collective security of NATO and the EU, and fill shortfalls in Peace Support Operations led by these two international organizations. The HUNSOF; however, is not a national tool to counter terrorism.

While developing and employing its SOF, the HDF has to manage five major challenges. Losses in the ranks of the relatively small HUNSOF deployed in Afghanistan might decrease public support for the entire Hungarian military presence in Afghanistan, and for Hungarian soldiers operating abroad in general. The HDF employs information campaigns to maintain public support for the HUNSOF employment in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The HDF has limited financial resources to develop and deploy its SOF. The HDF uses the United States Foreign Military Financing Program to finance HUNSOF, and U.S. donations and the NATO Special Operations Forces Transformation Initiative Concept to enhance the development and technical modernization of its SOF.

⁷⁰ Author, *E-mail Correspondence with the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion*.

The HDF made an ambitious force proposal to NATO: To assign the HUNSOF to future NATO missions, and to have a fully operational SOF company by the end of 2010. The HDF must develop its SOF rapidly to meet this force proposal to NATO.

Because the attrition of HUNSF operators leaving for more profitable civilian jobs is a concern, the HDF developed retention procedures and practices to be competitive in the labor market, and retain SF operators.

The HDF lacked expertise to develop its SOF. The HDF requested the mentorship of U.S. Mobile Training Teams to execute the training of the HUNSF, assigned operators, non-commissioned officers, and staff officers to conduct SOF-related studies and training abroad, and deployed its SOF elements to NATO operations to gain field experience. The future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should advise the military leadership about how to more efficiently manage *inter alia* these challenges. The next chapter studies the employment of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan in 2009.

V. THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN IN 2009

The Republic of Hungary has contributed military forces to the international community's military efforts in Afghanistan since 2003. The HUNSOF deployment in Afghanistan is an organic part of its development: It is its testing stage. The first Hungarian Special Operations Task Unit (HUN SOTU) of the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion, reinforced with other elements, operated in Afghanistan between February and June 2009, while the second rotation was deployed between June and October 2009. The deployed HUNSOF in Afghanistan is under NATO-led ISAF command and part of U.S. Task Force 1/10. The United States has played the role of framework nation for the HUNSOF.

This chapter studies ISAF, ISAF SOF, and the HUNSOF's first two rotations in Afghanistan between February and October 2009. The first section reviews the strength and mission, command and control, structure, and challenges of ISAF; and mission, tasks, and structure of ISAF SOF. The second section reviews the mission, task, structure, command and control, national caveat, and mandate of the deployed HUNSOF in Afghanistan, as well as the challenges the HUNSOF faces in Afghanistan. The third section summarizes the findings of Chapter V.

A. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN

1. Strength and Mission

Former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated that Afghanistan was "NATO's most important operational priority," while U.S. President Barack Obama

called Afghanistan “the most important mission to NATO.”⁷¹ Yet in their article, Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason call Afghanistan “today’s Vietnam.”⁷² In December 2001, NATO launched its International Security Assistance Force with the task of securing the capital of Kabul, based on a UN mandate. ISAF gradually expanded the mission to include the whole country starting in October 2003. Today, ISAF is a multinational operation of some 67,700 personnel, deployed by forty-two Troop Contributing Nations.⁷³ ISAF’s mission is to assist the Afghan government and authorities in providing security and stability, and to create the conditions for reconstruction and development.

2. Command and Control

ISAF is commanded by a classic three-level command and control structure. At the strategic level, NATO Allied Command Operations (ACO) in Mons, Belgium is responsible for all Alliance operations; therefore, it also assumes the overall command of the ISAF. At the operational level, Allied Joint Force Command Headquarters Brunssum (JFC HQ B) in the Netherlands exercises the operational command. In other words, JFC HQ B is the Operational Headquarters (OHQ) of ISAF. At the tactical level, Headquarters ISAF (HQ ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan, serves as the operational theatre

⁷¹ The White House, “Remarks by President Obama and NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer after Meeting,” *Office of the Press Secretary*, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-President-Obama-and-NATO-Secretary-General-Jaap-de-Hoop-Scheffer-After-Meeting/, March 25, 2009. John J. Kruzel, “Obama Calls Afghanistan NATO’s Most Important Mission,” *Global Security*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2009/09/mil-090929-afps04.htm>, September 29, 2009. (both accessed October 2, 2009).

⁷² Thomas H. Johnson, M. Chris Mason, “Saigon 2009, Afghanistan is Today’s Vietnam, No Question Mark Needed,” *Foreign Policy*, August 2009, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/08/20/saigon_2009, (accessed August 25, 2009).

⁷³ ISAF Troop Contributing Nation, number of deployed troop as of October 1, 2009: Albania 250; Australia 1,200; Austria 4; Azerbaijan 90; Belgium 510; Bosnia and Herzegovina 2; Bulgaria 460; Canada 2,830; Croatia 290; the Czech Republic 340; Denmark 700; Estonia 150; Finland 130; France 3,070; Georgia 1; Germany 4,245; Greece 125; Hungary 310; Iceland 8; Ireland 7; Italy 2,795; Jordan 7; Latvia 165; Lithuania 250; Luxembourg 8; the Netherlands 2,160; New Zealand 220; Norway 600; Poland 2,025; Portugal 105; Romania 990; Singapore 2; Slovakia 240; Slovenia 80; Spain 1,000; Sweden 430; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 185; Turkey 820; Ukraine 10; the United Arab Emirates 25; the United Kingdom 9,000; the United States 31,855. ISAF, “ISAF Troops in Numbers (Placemat),” <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.html> (accessed October 5, 2009).

level command for the mission. Therefore, HQ ISAF is the Force Headquarters (FHQ) of ISAF. The force commander is a four-star general who is also the Commander of ISAF and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, and, therefore, coordinates both ISAF operations and the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom.

3. Structure

Five Regional Commands under HQ ISAF coordinate activities of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in their respective areas of responsibility. Twenty-six PRTs operate in Afghanistan: there are five PRTs under the German-led Regional Command North in Mazar-e-Sharif, four PRTs under the Italian-led Regional Command West in Herat, four PRTs under the Dutch-led Regional Command South in Kandahar (Canada, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom rotate as the lead-nation), 13 PRTs under the U.S.-led Regional Command East in Bagram, and there are no PRTs in the French-led Regional Command Capital in the capital of Kabul. Figure 3 indicates the location of ISAF Regional Commands and Provincial Reconstruction Teams.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ NATO SITCEN Geo Branch, “Map of Afghanistan Showing the Regional Commands (ISAF RCs) and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ISAF PRTs) as of April 7, 2009,” http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/maps/graphics/afghanistan_prt_rc.pdf (accessed October 5, 2009).

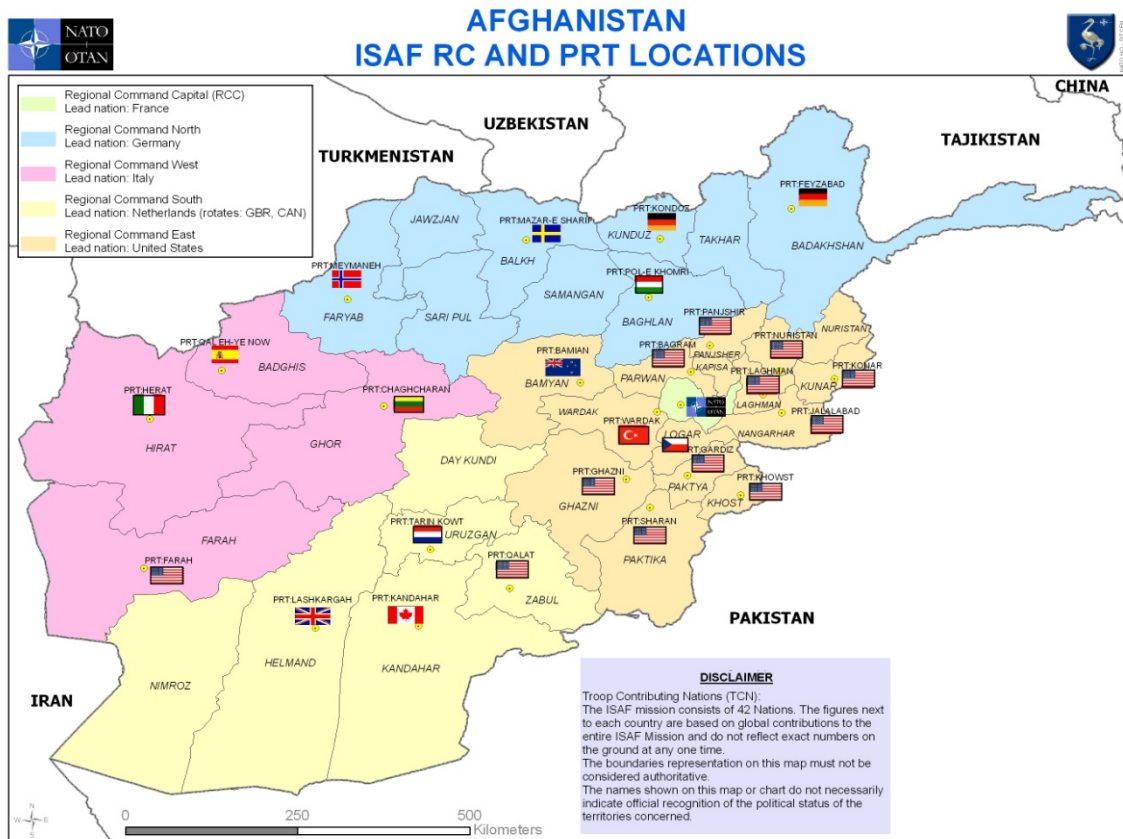


Figure 3. Location of ISAF Regional Commands and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (After Reference listed in Footnote no. 74.)

4. Challenges

First and foremost, the ISAF has to fight, as David Kilcullen characterizes in *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, a “hybrid war” of counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, counter-narcotics, and tribal warfare.⁷⁵ In his assessment, U.S. General Stanley A. McChrystal, Commander of ISAF and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, declared that ISAF’s eight-year campaign to win the “hybrid war” was not going well, stating that, “The situation in Afghanistan is serious,” but, “Success is

⁷⁵ David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5.

achievable.”⁷⁶ To achieve success, General McChrystal called for an urgent change in military strategy from “hunt, kill or capture” to “clear, hold, and build,” and the approval of as many as 40,000 additional troops needed to retake the initiative from the resurgent Taliban. U.S. President Obama has recently sent a surge of 21,000 troops to Afghanistan, bringing the total to 68,000 U.S. Forces stationed in Afghanistan altogether. If approved, the question is whether a new strategy (quality) and another major troop increase (quantity) could contribute to success.

A second challenge resides in the fact that the ISAF has to confront problems of legitimacy. In order to succeed, the ISAF counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency campaign requires a legitimate Afghan government. The fraudulent 2009 presidential election in Afghanistan, however, cast doubt on the legitimacy of President Hamid Karzai’s administration in the eyes of Afghan people, the Taliban “shadow government,” and the International Community. If there is no legitimate governance in Afghanistan, the ISAF might appear as an occupying force – an awful situation for the ISAF, but a greatly exploitable opportunity for the Taliban. The question is how the currently weak Afghan state can handle this legitimacy crisis.

A third challenge is that the ISAF is not mandated to deal with the complex Afghanistan/Pakistan problem. Even though the Pakistani regime took military actions against the Taliban, al Qaeda, and affiliated extremists in, for instance, the Swat Valley, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, especially Waziristan, have remained an insurgent stronghold. There are Wazir tribes in Pakistan loyal to the Taliban and with strong ties to tribes in Afghanistan. Insurgent Wazir-Taliban forces repeatedly launch operations from Pakistan through the porous Afghan-Pakistani border inside Afghanistan, and then return. Since the ISAF is mandated to carry out operations within the boundaries of Afghanistan, dealing with the Taliban and its Wazir associates in Pakistan rests on Pakistani Security Forces. After its offensives in 2003 and 2004, Pakistan made a cease-fire agreement with the Taliban. In autumn 2009, Pakistani Security Forces, with

⁷⁶ General Stanley A. McChrystal, U.S. Army. Commander U.S. Force-Afghanistan / ISAF, *COMISAF’s Initial Assessment*, HQ ISAF, August 30, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/21/AR2009092100110.html> (accessed September 25, 2009), 1.

U.S. assistance, launched another offensive against the Taliban in Waziristan. The question is whether Pakistan is willing and capable of grappling with the Taliban, al Qaeda, and affiliated extremists at this time.

A fourth challenge is seen in that the ISAF has to synchronize its efforts with other international missions. The EU, the UN, and the World Bank, in addition to NATO, have launched missions and projects in Afghanistan. It is, therefore, vital that efforts of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan, and the World Bank projects be synchronized. Key players expect the UN to step up as a coordinator. The question is whether the UN is able to deal with this complex objective.

A fifth challenge is that ISAF has to face force withdrawals before meeting political and military objectives. Continuous public support is vital for the future of the deployed HUNSO, ISAF SOF, ISAF as a whole, and military engagements in general. Different reasons and beliefs might lead to decreasing public support toward participating in Peace Support Operations, or continuing military campaigns.

The Spanish public ceased supporting its government's Iraqi foreign policy because the U.S.-led Coalition of the Willing was lacking a UN mandate and, "Many believe the 11 March train bomb attacks were a result of the former government's support of the US policy."⁷⁷ Yielding under public pressure, the freshly elected Spanish government pulled out its 1,300-man contingent from the Coalition of the Willing in 2004. The Spanish force withdrawal then caused other nations to leave the coalition too. Since Spain commanded a multinational brigade that included 302 troops from the Dominican Republic, 368 troops from Honduras, and 230 troops from Nicaragua, these

⁷⁷ BBC News, "Spain PM Orders Iraq Troops Home," *BBC*, April 18, 2004, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_coalition.htm (accessed October 7, 2009).

latter three have also withdrawn their contingents from Iraq.⁷⁸ Decreasing public support in Spain resulted in the withdrawal from the Coalition of the Willing of altogether 2,200 military personnel from four countries.

Another reason for force withdrawal could be casualty aversion. In the case of an ISAF Troop Contributing Nation, which – similar to Hungary – has an important, but not vital, national interest in participating in ISAF with SOF and general purpose forces that subsequently suffer heavy casualties, the political leadership might decide to withdraw its forces partially or completely from Afghanistan.

Declining public support in an ISAF Troop Contributing Nation might generate similar to or greater international force withdrawal from Afghanistan than the Spanish withdrawal from Iraq. Force withdrawals would have a negative effect on ISAF counter-insurgency capabilities. Reducing the number of ISAF SOF would raise the burden placed on the less capable Afghan counter-insurgency forces, which, in turn, could jeopardize mission success.

U.S. Marines, for example, left the Nicaraguan Guardia Nacional and the allied Miskito tribes alone in the Rio Coco area to deal with the Sandinista guerrillas in 1981.⁷⁹ Lacking U.S. assistance, the Guardia Nacional was soon defeated by the Sandinistas.

The scenario was similar when U.S. Forces were withdrawn from Vietnam, leaving their South Vietnamese allies alone in early 1973. Consequently, the North Vietnamese communist insurgents defeated the orphaned South Vietnamese Forces by June 1975.

Eight years of fighting in remote Afghanistan that have resulted in casualties to American, Asian, and European Troop Contributing Nations might lead to reduced public support for ISAF. As happened with Spain, some nations, yielding under public pressure,

⁷⁸ Peter Prengaman, “Dominican Republic to Pull Troops Out of Iraq Early,” *Associated Press*, April 20, 2004, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/168-general/36949.html> (accessed October 8, 2009).

⁷⁹ David C. Brooks, “US Marines, Miskitos and the Hunt for Sandino: The Rio Coco Patrol in 1928,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 21, No. 2, May 1989, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/156996> (accessed July 29, 2009), 311–342.

might withdraw their SOF and/or general purpose forces from Afghanistan. One leaving nation then might induce others also to withdraw. As a consequence of multitudinous international force withdrawal, Afghan Security Forces might easily fall to Taliban insurgents, and the return of the Taliban to power might also mean the return of al Qaeda and affiliated extremists. This scenario would be a complete mission failure for NATO and the whole international community.

To avoid mission failure, Troop Contributing Nations have to generate public support for ISAF. In practice, however, some ISAF Troop Contributing Nations have already started making announcements about their planned withdrawals:

Canada has reaffirmed its intention to withdraw 2,500 soldiers in 2011. Holland is set to follow suit. And the German and Italian governments find it increasingly difficult to justify their troop contributions.⁸⁰

This discussion has demonstrated the public's potential to influence military engagements including ISAF, and the importance of strategic patience. The question is, what is the tipping point of the public within Troop Contributing Nations.

5. Mission, Tasks, and Structure of ISAF Special Operations Forces

Historically, SOF implements irregular warfare. Both Kilcullen and General McChrystal have recommended shifting from an enemy-centric conventional warfare approach to a population-centric irregular form of warfare; therefore, it is worthwhile to study SOF inside ISAF.

The mission of ISAF SOF is to support indigenous conventional forces in countering an insurgency. To achieve this mission ISAF SOF carries out both direct and indirect tasks. In his article, Admiral Eric T. Olson, Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, profoundly captures the essence of direct and indirect tasks or approaches by using the “killing alligators and draining the swamp” analogy:

⁸⁰ U.S. Colonel T. X. Hammes, U.S. Major William S. McCallister, and U.S. Colonel John M. Collins, “Afghanistan: Connecting Assumptions and Strategy,” *U.S. Naval Institute*, Proceedings, November 2009, 16–20.

The direct approach consists of those efforts that disrupt violent extremist organizations - the polite way of saying capturing, killing, and interdicting terrorists and terrorist networks to prevent them from harming us in the near term. It also denies access to and use of weapons of mass destruction by violent extremist organizations, many of which have declared their specific intent to acquire and use such weapons to kill great numbers of people in the U.S. and elsewhere. These operations are conducted largely by the military. The direct approach is urgent, necessary, chaotic and kinetic, and the effects are mostly short term.

But they are not decisive. Enduring results come from the indirect approaches - those in which we enable partners to combat violent extremist organizations themselves by contributing to their capabilities through training, equipment, transfer of technology, wargaming [*sic*], and so forth. It consists of efforts to deter tacit and active support for violent extremist organizations where the government is either unwilling or unable to remove terrorist sanctuaries. It is the efforts to shape and stabilize the environment that impact the enemy in the longterm [*sic*]. This is truly “draining the swamp,” rather than simply attempting to capture or kill all of the “alligators.”⁸¹

Direct task/approach/action is also called black or kinetic mission, while indirect task/approach/action is called white or non-kinetic mission.

ISAF has nine Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs) that carry out direct and indirect actions all over Afghanistan. An SOTF is comprised of Special Operations Task Groups (SOTGs). A Special Operations Task Group is made up of Special Operations Task Units (SOTUs). “A Special Operations Task Unit is the lowest level of a SOF tactical-level combat element [and] . . . is normally comprised of 4-16 personnel.”⁸² A Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) coordinates, deconflicts, and synchronizes special operations with conventional forces. As of October 2009, Australia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the United

⁸¹ Admiral Eric T. Olson, “A Balanced Approach to Irregular Warfare,” *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, Spring 2009 - Number 16, <http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2009/16/olson.php> (accessed May 9, 2009).

⁸² NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*, AJP-3.5, January 2009, 3–5.

Kingdom, and the United States are contributing special operations forces to ISAF. Also, U.S. SOF operates under Operation Enduring Freedom's chain-of-command.

This section studied ISAF and ISAF SOF. The next section studies the deployed HUNSOF in Afghanistan.

B. THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

1. Mission, Task, and Structure

The mission of the HUNSOF is to support indigenous conventional forces in countering insurgency in the Wardak province of Afghanistan, situated in the U.S.-led Regional Command East. To achieve the mission, the HUNSOF carries out direct and indirect tasks equally.⁸³ The deployed HUNSOF consists of one SOTU and two staff officers. The HUN SOTU was reinforced with a National Intelligence Support Team and a language assistant, and was inserted into the U.S. SOTF. The United States serves as a framework nation for the HUNSOF. One staff officer serves at the SOCCE in Kabul; he is the liaison officer to the Afghan National Security Forces. The other staff officer serves at the SOTG; he is also the red card holder who has the authority to give the executive order to the HUN SOTU.

2. Command and Control, National Caveat, and Mandate

The deployed HUNSOF in Afghanistan remains under full Hungarian national Operational Command (OPCOM). Operational control (OPCON) is exercised by the Commander of the SOCCE, while tactical control (TACON) is exercised by the Commander of the U.S. SOTG in which the HUNSOF is inserted.

The HUNSOF is authorized to carry out operations, except for counter-narcotics, within the boundaries of Afghanistan. The Hungarian Parliament has endorsed the government's recommendation to extend the mandate of the HUNSOF until October 2010.

⁸³ Author's interview with Lieutenant Colonel Imre Porkoláb, Commander of the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion, Monterey, California, August 26, 2009.

3. Challenges

The deployed HUNSOE in Afghanistan lacks materials and operation funds, staff officers and language assistants, and experience, and has to maintain a high operational tempo.

The HUNSOE lacks some medical and telecommunications materials. Also, the allocated amount of operations funds for the HUNSOE is considered to be less than operational flexibility would require. The lack of Pashtun-Hungarian language assistants and staff officers who meet all operational requirements assigned to headquarters staff positions is a concern. Since the HUNSOE does not have operational experience in carrying out special operations, especially in countering insurgency, it relies on the mentoring of U.S. SOF experts. HUN SOTUs have a short tour of four months in which to demonstrate their capabilities, produce results, and improve skills; therefore, they have to maintain a high operational tempo. The future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOE should lobby for better conditions that could enhance the deployment of the HUNSOE in Afghanistan.

This section briefly portrayed the deployed HUNSOE in Afghanistan in 2009, while Chapter VI provides a more focused analysis on the effectiveness of these forces. The next section summarizes the findings of Chapter V.

C. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The international community faces great challenges in Afghanistan, and ISAF is not performing well. Politicians and military strategists are still discussing what would be the best mission, strength, mandate, and cooperation among military components in their efforts to defeat the hybrid war in Afghanistan. Strategic patience in Troop Contributing Nations is indispensable to continue and improve ISAF. Nevertheless, there are signs of declining political commitment within some of these nations.

Nine nations contribute with SOFs to ISAF. ISAF SOFs carry out direct and indirect actions in order to support Afghan conventional forces in countering insurgency. By operating in Wardak province of Afghanistan since February 2009, the HUNSOF contributes to achieving the ISAF SOF mission.

This chapter studies the first two HUNSOF rotations, while the third and future rotations invite analysis from Hungarian subject matter experts. The next chapter assesses the effectiveness of SOF.

VI. ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

Effectiveness measures the degree to which a system attains its goals. The contemporary discipline of Organizational Design conceptualizes effectiveness in terms of system resources or input goals, internal process goals, output goals, and stakeholders.⁸⁴ It is the stakeholder approach among these four perspectives that mostly focuses on human nature. The stakeholder approach puts the actors, their behavior, interaction, purposes, deliberations, decisions, intentions, motives, values, and norms at the center of its scientific inquiry; therefore, it best fits this thesis.

Richard L. Daft claims in *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* that “[t]he strength of the stakeholder approach is that it takes a broad view of effectiveness and examines factors in the environment as well as within the organization” and underlining this approach “acknowledges that there is no single measure of effectiveness.”⁸⁵

This chapter focuses on the effectiveness of SOF. The first section introduces a Collaborative Assessment Guide. The second section assesses the effectiveness of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan with a Collaborative Assessment Guide. The third section summarizes the findings of Chapter VI.

A. COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT GUIDE

The *NATO SOF Study* states that SOF has to be optimized in order to mitigate risk of failure and provide a high probability of success:

Although the entire military and security establishment seeks to continue to evolve and enhance its capabilities to confront the dynamic threat among the ambiguous environment, SOF in particular needs to be

⁸⁴ David P. Hannah, *Designing Organizations for High Performance* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1988).

⁸⁵ Richard L. Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* (International Edition Publisher: South-Western College Pub, 2001), 28.

optimized or made as perfect, functional, and effective as possible to ensure they can succeed when called to perform missions and tasks beyond the standard capabilities of conventional forces.⁸⁶

Even though there are useful – mostly quantitative – writings that provide models for measuring effectiveness, the contemporary discussion about measuring combat effectiveness does not result in a universally accepted model.

Trevor N. Dupuy uses the Operational Lethality Index and the Result Index to measure the effectiveness of the German and Allied Forces in World War II.⁸⁷ He states that German divisions were better organized and prepared for combat, and this led to a more effective ground combat capability over Allies' Forces.⁸⁸

In his classic Operations Research Model, Brian McCue studies *inter alia* the Bay transit and the U-boat circulation models to measure the effectiveness of submarine and anti-submarine warfare during World War II.⁸⁹

By measuring morale, logistics, leadership, intelligence, initiative, and technology of defense forces on a 9-point scale, Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam III provide evidence for the phenomenon that democracies tend to be more superior in battlefield effectiveness and, therefore, win more wars.⁹⁰

Glenn A. Kent uses the SABER GRAND Model to assess the effectiveness of bomber attacks and anti-ballistic missiles deployment.⁹¹ And Scott S. Gartner criticizes

⁸⁶ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 15, 18.

⁸⁷ Trevor N. Dupuy, *Mythos or Verity? The Quantified Judgment Model and German Combat Effectiveness* (Lexington: Society for Military History, 1986).

⁸⁸ Dupuy, *Mythos or Verity?* 209.

⁸⁹ Brian McCue, *U-Boats in the Bay of Biscay, an Essay in Operation Analysis* (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1990).

⁹⁰ Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam III, *Democracy and Battlefield Military Effectiveness* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1998).

⁹¹ Glenn A. Kent, *Thinking about American's Defense, An Analytical Memoir*, RAND Corporation, 2008, 199–217.

the quantitative indicators of counting insurgent Viet Cong bodies and captured weapons to assess U.S. performance during the Vietnam War.⁹²

There is a growing literature that aims at measuring the effectiveness of land, air, and maritime warfare, but there exists no widely accepted method that can be used to assess NATO's performance in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Iraq, and elsewhere.

There is a similar discussion without result about the question of what makes SOF successful. William H. McRaven believes that relative superiority, which can be achieved by simplicity, security, repetition, surprise, speed, and purpose, is the key for SOF success.⁹³

Robert G. Spulak Jr. states flexibility, creativity, and a high degree of training help SOFs to overcome the friction of war at a lower level of risk than that experienced by general purpose forces.⁹⁴

Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr. claim that SOF's ability to cooperate by, through, and with indigenous forces makes SOF successful.⁹⁵ Additionally, the *NATO SOF Study* emphasizes that successful execution of special operations requires a high level of collaboration among various elements, and the importance of "formalized multilateral NATO SOF partnership" because "Ad hoc random partnership cannot build the level of mutual trust and confidence needed for better interoperability on the battlefield."⁹⁶

⁹² Scott S. Gartner, *Strategic Assessment in War, Chapter 5, U.S. Ground Strategy in the Vietnam War* (Binghamton: Vail-Ballou Press, 1997), 117–146.

⁹³ William H. McRaven, *SPEC OPS, Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Presidio Press, 1996).

⁹⁴ Robert G. Spulak Jr., "A Theory of Special Operations, The Origin, Qualities, and Use of SOF," *The Joint Special Operations University Press*, JSOU Report 07-7, October 2007.

⁹⁵ Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr., "Winning with Allies, The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model," *International Security*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2006, 124–160.

⁹⁶ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 17, 34.

Porkoláb and Bári advocate that successful special operations depend on clear national and theater strategic objectives; effective command, control, communications, computer, and intelligence support; and a force trained, equipped, and organized specifically to conduct special operations.⁹⁷

Ultimately, there is no consensus on what makes a successful SOF. This thesis contributes to the ongoing discussion about what characteristics make SOF successful by providing a Collaborative Assessment Guide for further consideration.

The Collaborative Assessment Guide is a set of guiding criteria designed to assess SOF effectiveness in multinational operations and campaigns. This Collaborative Assessment Guide combines and improves the views of Daft, Andres, Wills, and Griffith, and the *NATO SOF Study*.

Daft claims a stakeholder approach is adequate to analyze effectiveness within the environment and the organization.⁹⁸ Andres, Wills, and Griffith state SOFs are successful when they cooperate by, through, and with indigenous forces while the *NATO SOF Study* advocates SOF collaboration with allied and partner SOFs and general purpose forces for effective interoperability on the battlefield.⁹⁹

In line with Daft's stakeholder approach, as well as Andres, Wills, and Griffith's underlying SOF skills and *NATO SOF Study's* reference point, the Collaborative Assessment Guide claims effective SOFs depend on their ability to collaborate with allied/partner SOFs, national and allied/partner conventional forces, and indigenous forces and population. Therefore, SOF effectiveness should be measured by these abilities.

This thesis, thus, establishes the following criteria for assessing SOF effectiveness while operating in multinational operations and campaigns:

⁹⁷ Porkoláb and Bári, *Enhancing National Security*, 3.

⁹⁸ Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory*, 28.

⁹⁹ Andres, Wills, and Griffith, *Winning with Allies*, 124–160; and NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 17, 34.

- Ability to collaborate with allied/partner SOF during pre-deployment and employment periods;
- Ability to collaborate with national conventional forces during pre-employment and employment periods;
- Ability to collaborate with allied/partner conventional forces during pre-employment and employment periods;
- Ability to collaborate with indigenous forces and population during employment period.

The assessment of SOF effectiveness while carrying out special operations unilaterally requires a different set of criteria.

The Collaborative Assessment Guide assesses SOF ability to collaborate with allied/partner SOF during pre-deployment and employment periods; with national conventional forces during pre-employment and employment periods; with allied/ partner conventional forces during pre-employment and employment periods; and with indigenous forces and population during employment periods. The Collaborative Assessment Guide determines whether or not SOF collaboration with these stakeholders is sufficient. SOF collaboration is sufficient when these forces have stable working relationships with the above-mentioned stakeholders.

The establishment of a more detailed method to measure SOF effectiveness invites analysis by subject matter experts. The next section assesses the effectiveness of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan with the Collaborative Assessment Guide.

B. ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HUNGARIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN WITH COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Applying criteria of the Collaborative Assessment Guide to the HUNSOF in Afghanistan, mission success relies on the HUNSOF ability to establish a sufficient level of collaboration with the U.S. SOF during the pre-deployment period and in Afghanistan; with Hungarian conventional forces during the pre-employment period and in

Afghanistan; with allied conventional forces during the pre-employment period and in Afghanistan, and with the Afghan population and Security Forces. The HUNSOF is a developing capability, and its employment to ISAF is its first employment as SOF; therefore, the HUNSOF has neither traditional partners nor experience in collaboration. Nonetheless, the HUNSOF has managed to establish a sufficient level of collaboration with all relevant Afghan, Hungarian, and international stakeholders. Also, the English language is crucial for the HUNSOF when working with international stakeholders.

1. HUNSOF Collaboration With U.S. SOF During Pre-Employment Period

The HUNSOF has established a sufficient level of collaboration with U.S. SOF during the pre-employment period. Since 2006, Mobile Training Teams consisting of U.S. instructors have mentored the development of the HUNSOF. In the course of the last few years, the HUNSOF has become familiar with the U.S. SOF doctrine, planning, training requirements and methods, tactics, techniques and procedures, small arms and light weapons, and, the English language. The HUNSOF also participated in the NATO SOF exercise “Jackal Stone” in 2008 and 2009, along with the U.S. Task Force 1/10. These exercises provided the opportunity for both elements to study each other’s equipment and share operational tactics, techniques and procedures.

During its second rotation, the HUNSOF conducted pre-employment training with its counterparts from the U.S. Task Force 1/10 in Germany. International SOF courses and seminars facilitated by the 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion and the Peace Support Training Centre helped to establish a common understanding about SF and SOF, and to advance regional cooperation. Moreover, SOF operators, non-commissioned officers, and staff officers were assigned to conduct SOF-related studies and training in the United States. Upon returning, their gained knowledge has also contributed to developing a commonality and interoperability between Hungarian and U.S. SOF.

2. HUNSOF Collaboration With U.S. SOF in Afghanistan

The HUNSOF has established a sufficient level of collaboration with U.S. SOF in Afghanistan. The United States serves as a framework nation for the HUNSOF, and the working language in this effort is English. Even though the Technical Agreement between Hungarian and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan is not completed yet, U.S. Task Force 1/10 provided combat support and combat service support to the HUNSOF. Additionally, because there was no Hungarian national support element deployed to the HUNSOF, assigned operators had to deal with logistics, sacrificing valuable operational time. In practice, the collaboration between the HUNSOF and U.S. Task Force 1/10 took place in a shared camp and in the common area of operation of the Wardak province. The HUNSOF and U.S. Task Force 1/10 planned and executed direct actions, and trained the assigned unit of the Afghan National Police together. Accessing and sharing sensitive and confidential information was challenging because of the lack of technological background and strategic agreements. In sum, existing difficulties disturb, but do not endanger, the collaboration between the HUNSOF and U.S. Task Force 1/10.

3. HUNSOF Collaboration With Hungarian Conventional Forces During Pre-Employment Period

The HUNSOF has established a sufficient level of collaboration with Hungarian conventional forces during the pre-employment period. National and international exercises and training provide opportunities to strengthen the cooperation between the elements of the HUNSOF capability package, and to establish face-to-face relations. In this context, the primary working language is Hungarian and the secondary is English.

Since 2005, Exercise Direction of Action is the most important and largest annual training event of the HDF, designed to combine traditional and newly developed capabilities such as the HUNSOF, and present them to the political leadership and the public.¹⁰⁰ The annual NATO SOF exercise “Jackal Stone” is another occasion where the

¹⁰⁰ Ministry of Defense, Hungarian Defense Forces, “Direction of Action 2009,” Ministry of Defense, Hungarian Defense Forces, http://www.hm.gov.hu/files/9/12179/direction_of_action_2009-web.pdf (accessed October 5, 2009).

HUNSOFF capability package can practice combined and joint cooperation in a multinational environment. The pre-deployment training for all assigned military, police, and civilian personnel to Afghanistan is held at the Peace Support Training Centre. Nonetheless, much work remains with regard to deepening the collaboration between various elements of the HUNSOFF, especially between special forces and special operations capable forces.

4. HUNSOFF Collaboration With Hungarian Conventional Forces in Afghanistan

The HUNSOFF has established a sufficient level of collaboration with Hungarian conventional forces in Afghanistan. There are two major Hungarian force structures with conventional forces in Afghanistan at the moment: the Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Hungarian-U.S. Operational Liaison and Mentoring Team.

Hungary took over responsibility from the Netherlands for the Provincial Reconstruction Team operating in the Baghlan province of Afghanistan in October 2006. The Hungarian Provincial Reconstruction Team (HUN PRT) is located in and directly subordinate to the German-led ISAF Regional Command North. The mission of the HUN PRT is to assist, support and mentor the Government of Afghanistan and the Afghan National Security Forces; to cooperate with local and international actors in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan; to maintain a safe and secure environment in the Baghlan province; and to demonstrate an ISAF presence. Camp Pannonia in the provincial capital of Pol-e Khomri is the base of the HUN PRT.

Reconstruction done by the HUN PRT is a joint effort of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement of the Republic of Hungary. The Special Committee of the Government on PRT Affairs oversees the performance of the HUN PRT. Some 310 military personnel and a handful of police officers, civilian representatives, and assigned project managers from the above-listed ministries work for

mission success. Also, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Slovakia have delegated staff officers to the HUN PRT.¹⁰¹ Consequently, the primary working language is English.

The HUN PRT has a budget of HUF 500 million (approximately USD 2.7 million) of which HUF 200 million (approximately USD 1.8 million) is allocated for reconstruction projects. The following countries have also contributed to reconstruction projects carried out by the HUN PRT: Japan (approximately USD 170,000, in 2008), Greece (300,000 Euros, approximately USD 435,000, in 2009; and 500,000 Euros, approximately USD 725,000, in 2008), and Qatar.

The Hungarian Parliament has endorsed the government's recommendation to extend the mandate of the HUN PRT until October 2010. Thanks to the relatively small geographical distance between the Wardak and Baghlan provinces, the HUN PRT is able to provide logistical support to the HUNSOFA through ground lines of communication. Equally important is the information flow between the HUNSOFA and the HUN PRT's National Intelligence Support Element.

The Hungarian-U.S. Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (HUN-U.S. OMLT) started its training activity in the Baghlan province of Afghanistan in April 2009. The HUN-U.S. OMLT is directly subordinate to the German-led ISAF Regional Command North. The mission of the HUN-U.S. OMLT is to mentor and train the 700-man strong 3rd (infantry) Battalion of the 2nd Brigade of the 209th Corps of the Afghan National Army until Afghan Forces have the capability to take over tasks and duties currently carried out by ISAF. The base of the HUN-U.S. OMLT is Khelagay Base, which is about 20 km from Camp Pannonia, the HUN PRT's base.

The 60-man strong HUN-U.S. OMLT consists of roughly the same number of Hungarian personnel assigned from different units and U.S. troops from the Ohio National Guard. The primary working language is English, but the HUN-U.S. OMLT also employs Pashtun language assistants for communicating with Afghan Forces. The Hungarian Parliament has endorsed the government's recommendation to extend the

¹⁰¹ Croatia continues contributing and Montenegro will deploy a platoon to the HUN PRT in 2010.

Hungarian participation in the HUN-U.S. OMLT through August 2010. Similarly, the HUNSOF in Wardak province shares information with, and receives some logistical support from, the HUN-U.S. OMLT in the nearby Baghlan province.

5. HUNSOF Collaboration With Allied Conventional Forces During Pre-Employment Period

The HUNSOF has established a sufficient level of collaboration with allied conventional forces during the pre-employment period. Units that comprise the HUNSOF capability package have all participated in multinational training, exercises, and more importantly, Peace Support Operations in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Individual and unit-level experience from these missions contributes to the growing knowledge and experience of the HUNSOF. Some of the units that comprise the HUNSOF capability package have bilateral relationships akin to blood and family with units of NATO member countries. For instance, the HDF 34th ‘László Bercsényi’ Special Operations Battalion has developed a longstanding and fruitful cooperation with the French 1st Parachute Hussar Regiment that was established by Count Bercsényi. Visits, exchanges, and trainings are frequent between the two “Bercsényi units.” The working language is English while collaborating with allied conventional forces.

6. HUNSOF Collaboration With Allied Conventional Forces in Afghanistan

The HUNSOF has established a sufficient level of collaboration with allied conventional forces in Afghanistan. The HUNSOF has established a working relationship with the Turkish-led PRT, the French-led OMLT, and U.S. conventional forces in the Wardak province. The working language is English when cooperating with allied conventional forces in Afghanistan.

Close cooperation and information sharing with these partners is vital to obtaining a high level of situation awareness and force protection, and to earning actionable intelligence. Gordon H. McCormick advocates that one of the greatest challenges of any

counter-insurgency is finding ways to target the insurgents.¹⁰² To be able to target insurgents, counter-insurgency forces have to earn the trust of the population. If the population is collaborative, targeting can be effective and counter-insurgency forces can defeat the insurgency. If the population does not collaborate with the counter-insurgency forces, the insurgents remain invisible, gain strength, and finally win their fight. The central question of any population-centric irregular warfare is how to convince the population to collaborate with, and in support of, the counter-insurgency forces rather than the insurgents.

It is worthwhile to mention U.S. Colonel Ralph O. Baker's experience from Iraq in explaining how counter-insurgency forces should earn the people's support.¹⁰³ To earn their support, Baker's brigade first sought to meet the Iraqis' expectations of security, food, shelter, electricity, jobs, and medical care. To demonstrate credibility, the brigade accomplished visible actions to improve the Baghdadis' emotional well-being and quality of life.

Thereafter, the brigade Information Operations structure repetitively communicated tangible results such as renovation, reconstruction, and development projects at every possible forum. In contrast, the Information Operations machinery reiterated how much damage the insurgents caused with their attacks. Instead of a full-scale, direct Information Operations campaign that held out little hope, Baker's brigade used local proxies to effectively reach out to the population. The Information Operations structure identified target audiences, especially respected community members such as religious and tribal leaders, governmental officials, and university and school leaders, and frequently engaged them.

Face-to-face interactions with target audiences gradually destroyed the walls of distrust. These meetings also provided the opportunity to deliver precisely tailored messages and highlight economic, political, security, and social results. After proving the

¹⁰² Gordon H. McCormick, *Mystic Diamond* (Unpublished), accessed from McCormick's Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare, Naval Postgraduate School, Summer 2008.

¹⁰³ Colonel Ralph O. Baker, "The Decisive Weapon: A Brigade Combat Team Commander's Perspective on Information Operations," *Military Review*, May-June 2006, 13-32.

coalition forces' credibility, target audiences started to forward the coalition's messages to the Iraqi public. The brigade has been able to demonstrably influence the perceptions of the Iraqis in favor of the coalition. As a result, locals have collaborated with the brigade more intensively and provided, with increasing magnitude, actionable intelligence against the insurgents.

This thesis asserts that Baker's methods from Iraq are applicable to ISAF counter-insurgency efforts in Afghanistan. The PRTs represent Baker's brigade in the struggle for earning the support and trust of the population in Afghanistan. If the Turkish-led PRT could earn the support and trust of Afghans in the Wardak province, the Turkish PRT might be a valuable and reliable source of information and actionable intelligence about insurgents. For this reason, the HUNSOF is trying to collaborate with the Turkish-led PRT as closely as possible.

7. HUNSOF Collaboration With the Afghan Population and Security Forces

The HUNSOF has established a sufficient level of collaboration with the Afghan population and Security Forces. The primary working language is Pashtun; the secondary, English. The limited number of available Pashtun-Hungarian language assistants fundamentally limits the HUNSOF's capability to communicate with the Afghan population and Security Forces. The HUNSOF employs a stakeholder analysis that enables it to acquire a nuanced understanding about the complex, diverse, and dynamic Afghan demographics and culture, which are comprised equally of friendly, hostile, and neutral stakeholders. Both the *CIMIC Handbooks of Baghlan Province* and of *Afghanistan* facilitate an understanding of the Afghan history, culture, and life.¹⁰⁴

Similar to Baker, the HUNSOF uses local proxies such as religious leaders, local governmental employees and other executives to influence the Afghan population within the assigned areas of Wardak province in favor of ISAF and the HUNSOF. Also, the

¹⁰⁴ HDF Civilian-Military Cooperation and Psychological Operations Centre, *Baghlan Tartomány CIMIC Kézikönyve* (Budapest, 2006). HDF Civilian-Military Cooperation and Psychological Operations Centre, *Afganisztán CIMIC Kézikönyve*, Harmadik, átdolgozott kiadás (Budapest, 2006).

HUNSOF has developed a network of informants in order to gain information with which the HUNSOF can first generate intelligence, then plan and execute kinetic and non-kinetic actions against insurgents, specifically against their improvised explosive device planting networks.

The HUNSOF also exploits their force multiplier capability. Hungarian and U.S. SOFs train the Afghan National Police Provincial Reserve Company for Wardak province. It is helpful that all Hungarian military personnel are experts of Soviet/Russian-made small arms and light weapons; therefore, the HUNSOF is qualified to provide *inter alia* weapon handling to Afghan Security Forces who are also equipped with Soviet/Russian-made weapons.

To summarize, the HUNSOF has reached out to relevant stakeholders, established sufficient levels of collaboration with them, and achieved local embeddedness. Strong and weak ties are vital to developing and sustaining high levels of situational awareness and information flow, which are the starting points for targeting Taliban insurgents, al Qaeda, and affiliated extremists with direct and indirect actions. As a result of their advancing collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the HUNSOF is receiving increasingly greater amounts of information from which the HUNSOF generates actionable intelligence, puts names on the Joint Prioritized Effect List, and finally carries out arrests.

Afghanistan is the first employment for the developing HUNSOF; thus, there is room for improvement in many fields. The deployed HUNSOF in Afghanistan has identified lessons learned in the fields of logistics, operator's equipment and weaponry, and compatibility of different technologies that might improve deployability, sustainability, and survivability of future rotations, contingents, and the whole HDF. Equally important for mission success is the HUNSOF's ability to collaborate with relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should improve its ability to collaborate with relevant stakeholders. This thesis provides a recommendation to improve the HUNSOF ability to collaborate with stakeholders in Chapter VII.

C. CHAPTER SUMMARY

Several models measure combat effectiveness, but none of them is universally accepted or focuses on collaboration with indigenous forces and population. Therefore, this thesis designed a Collaborative Assessment Guide and assessed the effectiveness of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan with this model. Figure 4 depicts the Collaborative Assessment Guide.

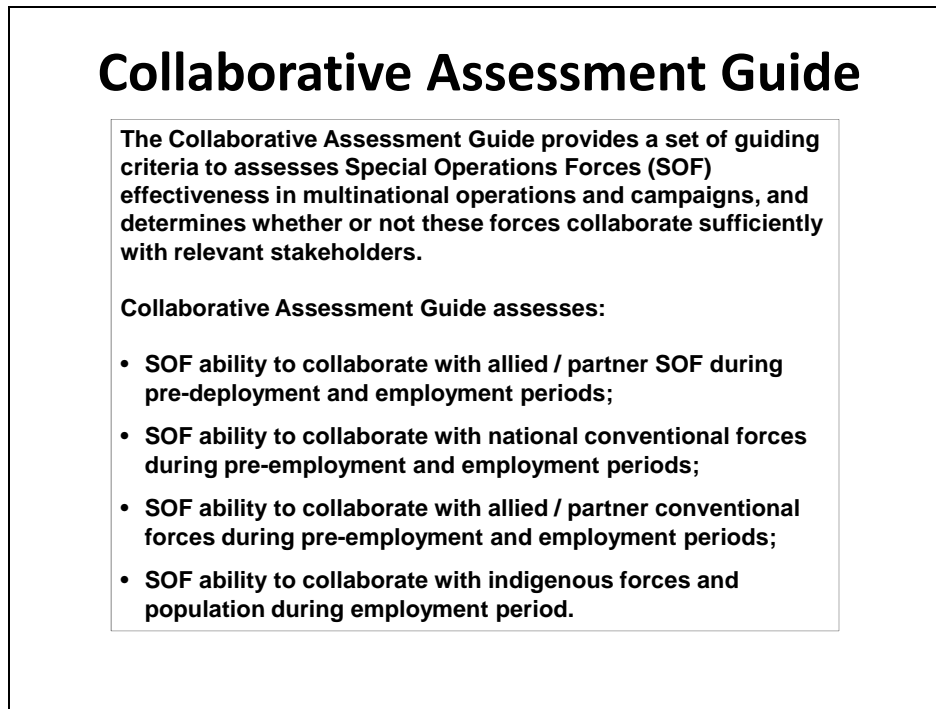


Figure 4. Collaborative Assessment Guide

The population-centric approach of special operations forces could and does contribute to winning the hybrid war in Afghanistan. These forces carry out both direct and indirect actions. This chapter argued that the HUNSOF managed to insert itself into the completely foreign cultural milieu of Afghanistan and establish a sufficient level of collaboration with all relevant indigenous, international, and national stakeholders. To be able to further improve its ability to collaborate with stakeholders, the HUNSOF needs to increase deployment in other theaters as well. The next chapter concludes the findings of this thesis and provides recommendations.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has recorded and analyzed the Hungarian experience of developing special operations forces between 2003 and 2009. In 2003, the Hungarian Ministry of Defense's comprehensive defense review identified special operations forces as a "niche" capability that could add strength to the defense forces and fill critical shortfalls in Peace Support Operations. The Hungarian political leadership endorsed developing a special operations capability package to enhance national security, contribute to the collective security of NATO and the EU, and fill shortfalls in Peace Support Operations led by these two international organizations.

The HDF scheduled the development of the HUNSOF in two phases. Units missing from the HUNSOF capability package were to be established in phase one. For instance, the 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion was established September 1, 2005, and the long-range reconnaissance battalion was transformed into a special forces battalion in phase one. This thesis studied the transformation of the long-range reconnaissance battalion into a special forces battalion in phase one. The cooperation between units in the HUNSOF capability package is to be strengthened in phase two. The 34th 'László Bercsényi' Special Operations Battalion is being transformed into a special operations battalion in the ongoing phase two. Hungarian subject matter experts should analyze phase two in the future.

The deployment of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan is evidence of the progress the HDF made in developing its SOF in the last seven years. The HDF have created the legal framework for developing and employing its SOF: The *Paper of the Chief of Defense Staff of the Ministry of Defense* adequately regulates the employment of the HUNSOF capability package within and beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Hungary. The HDF established units missing from the HUNSOF capability package, as well as the tactical and operational command and control elements of the HUNSOF, and made progress in integrating these forces into the Hungarian defense establishment. Mentored

by U.S. instructors, the HDF selected, trained, and educated the HUNSOF personnel. By deploying the HUNSOF in Afghanistan, the political and military leadership have achieved one of the national interests in developing these forces: The HUNSOF fills shortfalls in NATO-led ISAF.

Nevertheless, this thesis identified five points in which the development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved. Most important among these points is that the political and military leadership should fully exploit the capabilities of these forces for the security of Hungary.

- Capabilities of the HUNSOF should be fully exploited.
- The development and deployment of the HUNSOF require greater financial support.
- The HUNSOF should have a strategic command and control element that could more efficiently deal with the challenges this thesis identified during the development and the deployment of the HUNSOF.
- The development of the HUNSOF also requires the cumulation of knowledge, the collection of best international practices, the study of the SOF discipline, and the preparation of analyses and recommendations.
- The HUNSOF should improve their ability to collaborate with relevant indigenous and international stakeholders involved in conflicts.

The next section provides recommendations of how to address these five points and enhance the development and employment of the HUNSOF.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis recommends carrying out the following five recommendations to address the aforementioned points at which the development and employment of the HUNSOF could be improved. The Hungarian defense establishment should consider employing the HUNSOF as both an anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism capability. Danish, German, Norwegian, and Polish special operation forces, and especially their

special forces elements, are designed to protect, save, and rescue citizens and national interests abroad. The police assume purview for anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism tasks inside the boundaries of democracies, while the special forces of the defense establishment take these tasks abroad. The Hungarian defense establishment should analyze this division of labor and, if it has more benefits than the current one, adopt it. By doing so, Hungary could fulfill other national interests in developing its SOF: To add strength to the defense forces and enhance national security.

The HDF should allocate national financial resources to the development of the HUNSOF in the mid- and long-terms. This thesis acknowledges that current Hungarian political, economic, and social conditions do not allow the HDF to invest national money into the development of the HUNSOF. Nonetheless, it is odd that the development of the HUNSOF, which is considered to be one of the major ongoing HDF development projects, is currently financed privately from external financial sources. Should political, economic and social conditions turn favorable, the HDF should also invest Hungarian forints into the development of the HUNSOF. By doing so, less time would be required to meet force proposals to NATO and attain world-class and fully operational special operations forces.

The HDF should, in the short-term, assign a two-star Deputy Commander of the HDF Joint Forces Command for Special Operations Forces with a small expert staff. As this thesis pointed out, the future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF would have to advise the political and military leadership about how to more efficiently develop, deploy, and manage the HUNSOF. Tasks of the future strategic command and control element of the HUNSOF should include, but not be limited to:

- Maintaining public support for the HUNSOF employment in Afghanistan and elsewhere;
- Lobbying for better financial conditions that could enhance the development and deployment of the HUNSOF in Afghanistan, and elsewhere;

- Advising the political and military leadership on the avoidance of other ambitious force proposals to NATO in connection with the HUNSOF;
- Developing a comprehensive retention policy for the HUNSOF;
- Maintaining and improving cooperation with the mentoring U.S. SOF and NSCC, and continuing the assignment of HUNSOF personnel abroad for training and educational purposes in order to collect further knowledge and experience; and
- Improving the HUNSOF ability to collaborate with relevant indigenous and international stakeholders involved in conflicts in order to achieve a more effective operational activity.

This thesis acknowledges that the establishment of a Hungarian Special Operations Command and the creation of a Hungarian Special Operations Service are not realistic ambitions and are inopportune in the short- and mid-terms. The outlined Special Operations Section at the Department for Operation and Training of the Ministry of Defense will have even less responsibility than a National Military Staff Element for Special Operations, the least ambitious of the possible organizational designs for stewardship of SOF. Moreover, this future Section led by a lieutenant colonel or a colonel could not provide sufficient levels of representation of SOF interests within the Hungarian defense establishment, employ influence, or effectively tackle the five major challenges. Again, the *NATO SOF Study* provides a useful point of reference to find an adequate solution:

. . . [there is] the need for SOF leaders to have sufficient rank to operate as equals with, and have the appropriate level of influence among, their counterparts in the military services and on the national military staff.¹⁰⁵

Former services are today represented and supervised by two-star generals who are Deputies of the three-star Commander of the Joint Forces Command. There are four Deputies responsible for land forces, air forces and air defense forces, logistics; and the

¹⁰⁵ NSCC, *NATO SOF Study*, 21.

Chief of Staff of the JFC. Bearing in mind the *NATO SOF Study*'s point of reference and the current organizational design of the HDF, the Deputy Commander of the JFC for Special Operations Forces should also be a two-star general. The two-star general Deputy Commander of the JFC for Special Operations Forces, with a small expert staff, could effectively represent SOF interests, employ influence, and deal with the above mentioned major challenges. The Deputy Commander of the JFC for Special Operations Forces could also become a cornerstone for building the Special Operations Forces Command in the long-term if the current organizational design of the HDF changes.

The HDF and the HUNSOF community should develop subject matter experts by continuing to assign non-commissioned and commissioned officers to attend foreign military schools, academies, centers, and other educational institutions in the short-term. The development and employment of the HUNSOF also require thinkers who cumulate knowledge, collect best international practices, rigorously and systematically study the SOF discipline, prepare analyses and recommendations, analyze SOF history, follow international trends, and study how to optimize the stewardship of the HUNSOF. The HDF does not, however, have an institution that could teach SOF- and SF-related subjects to its SOF. In the short-term, the HDF should, thus, continue assigning non-commissioned and commissioned officers to carry out education abroad and improving its HUNSOF by exploiting the gathered knowledge and experience of reassigned graduates. The HDF and the HUNSOF community could develop their subject matter experts by assigning the Peace Support Training Centre for the NATO Centre of Excellence for SOF in the mid and long-terms.

The HUNSOF and its SF component should change their personnel selection mechanism and develop a balanced set of selection criteria that assesses candidates for skills that facilitate and enhance both direct and indirect actions in special operations. Tests and questionnaires that were designed to determine whether candidates meet psychological requirements to become long-range reconnaissance operators, paratroopers and scuba-divers who solely carried out direct actions are still in use for SF operators who, if selected, will also carry out indirect tasks. HUNSOF lessons learned from

Afghanistan indicate that collaboration with indigenous and international stakeholders involved in conflicts is vital for mission success. To achieve collaboration with relevant stakeholders, SOF operators should possess social skills such as cultural sensitivity, flexibility, patience, openness, and advanced communication skills.

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